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ADVENTURES OF A COUNTRY BOY



AMERICAN BOOK COMPANY

June 1916.2

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"SWING THRICE—AND OVER!"
(See p. 170)

ADVENTURES OF A COUNTRY BOY

By Jacob Abbott

Retold by Clifton Johnson



AMERICAN BOOK COMPANY

NEW YORK

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CHICAGO

765-1008

✓ Jun-1916.2

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ADVENTURES OF A COUNTRY BOY

E. P. I

INTRODUCTION

BY LYMAN ABBOTT

ALL good men love children, but my father not only loved, he respected them. This respect which he had for children was, I think, the secret of his power over them, which was quite as remarkable as his literary success in writing for them. In a true sense it might be said that he treated children as his equals, not through any device or from any scheme, but spontaneously and naturally.

He never deceived children, never tricked them with cunning devices, never lied to them. This may seem small praise, yet men—and for that matter women—who never lie to children are, I am afraid, a rather small minority. A promise to a child was quite as sacred in his eyes as a promise to a grown person. He would as soon have thought of defaulting on a promissory note as defaulting on a promise to a child. He trusted the judgment of children, took counsel

with them, not in a false pretense but in reality, and in all the matters which concerned them and their world was largely governed by their judgments. He threw responsibility upon them, great responsibility, and they knew it. The audacity of his confidence surprises me even now as I look back upon it. I entered college before I was fourteen. My father not only let me choose the college for myself, but made me decide for myself whether I would go to college. When the time for entrance examination approached, he called me to him, told me that if I went into business as an errand boy he would lay up for me every year what the college life would cost him, so that at eighteen I should have a capital of two thousand dollars and interest. Thus I not only had to decide that I would go to college, but also had to decide that I was willing to give up two thousand dollars for a college education, and two thousand dollars was a large sum to my boyish mind. But, as a result, I took college life with great seriousness, quite resolved to get the two thousand dollars' value out of the education. This act was quite characteristic of my father. Though he was my wisest counselor, I cannot

remember that he ever gave me a definite and specific piece of advice; he put questions before me with great clearness, summed up the *pros* and *cons* like a judge upon the bench, and then left me to be the final arbiter.

This respect which he showed to children inspired them with respect for themselves and for one another. It gave dignity to the children who came under his influence. That influence was a masterful one. I should misrepresent him if I gave the impression that he exercised no authority. On the contrary, his authority was supreme and final; he gave few commands, but he required prompt, implicit, and unquestioning obedience to those which he did give. I have known children to disobey him, but I never knew one to rebel against him. I do not know what would have happened in case of a rebellion. I think no child ever thought of it as possible. I never knew him to strike a blow. I do not recall that he ever sent a child to his room, or supperless to bed, or set him to write in his copy book, or to learn tasks, or resorted to any other of the similar expedients, necessary perhaps in school, and frequent in most families. In general he

simply administered natural penalties. If a child lied or broke his promises, he was distrusted. If he was careless or negligent, the things which were given to other children to play with were withheld from him. If he quarreled, he was taken away from his playmates, but made as happy as he could be made in solitude. The children were themselves encouraged to inflict a kind of child penalty. In the yard at Fewacres, his country home, which was a favorite playground for invited children from the village, as well as for his own grandchildren, he had a square stone set up. Then he said, "If any child gets cross and sulky and cries, he can go and sit on the 'crying stone' just as long as he wants to and cry it out." Whenever any child did grow sulky and cross, all the rest of the children clamored, "To the crying stone, to the crying stone," and it is needless to say that it was rarely the case that a child took advantage of the prerogative thus afforded him. This little incident I recall simply because it is significant of my father's methods with children. He distinguished sharply, and the children quickly learned to distinguish between advice and law.

When he gave advice the child was perfectly at liberty to regard it or disregard it as he pleased, and after disregarding it fell into no disrepute or disfavor of any kind. But law, when it was issued, which was not often, must be at once obeyed without hesitation, and without question. He approved and encouraged independence and self-confidence in children but he required prompt and unhesitating obedience.

This spirit of respect which my father had for children interprets his literary method. He never condescended to children, never talked down to them or wrote down to them. He believed they could understand large truths if they were simply and clearly stated. So in "Science for the Young" he dealt with some of the most interesting scientific phenomena; in his Red Histories he used biography to make clear the great historical epochs; in his "Young Christian" he interpreted the profound phases of spiritual experience. This spirit of confidence determined his style. He never sought for short and easy words, but selected what he thought the best word to express his meaning. The child, he said, will get the meaning of the word from the

context, or if he does not, he will ask his mother what the word means, and so he will be learning language. He did not write books about children for grown people to read. He wrote books for children because he shared their life with them. Perhaps it is a son's prejudice, but his books still seem to me to be among the best of true children's books.

A SKETCH OF THE AUTHOR'S LIFE

Jacob Abbott's ancestors were hardy, honest country folk who came from England to Massachusetts in early colonial days. His father married while a resident of Concord, New Hampshire, in 1798, and two years later moved to Hallowell, Maine, a town of some commercial importance on the Kennebec River. There Jacob, their eldest son, was born in 1803.

At the age of seventeen Jacob was graduated from Bowdoin College. Soon afterwards he accepted a position as teacher in the Portland Academy, where he had for one of his pupils the poet Longfellow, then a boy of thirteen. In intervals between teaching, he studied theology at Andover Seminary, and in 1824 he became a tutor at Amherst College.

He moved to Boston in 1829 to establish a school for young ladies. Meanwhile, he had married. About this time his first book was published. Other books followed, and he also wrote much for periodicals.

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After a few years he gave up teaching, and presently he moved to Farmington, seventy miles north of Portland, where he built a simple one-story cottage.

The road that passed his home led up a hill northerly to a plateau where stood the village, with its several churches and flourishing academy, overlooking one of the most fertile and tranquil river valleys in New England. Mr. Abbott sometimes occupied a village pulpit, or was called to officiate at a funeral, or to drive a few miles out into the back districts to address a Sunday school.

The cottage was on a four-acre tract of unimproved land diversified by bold slopes and wooded ravines, and traversed by a sluggish brook. A sandhill, perhaps fifty feet high, thrust out from the plateau on to his property, and this he trimmed with a scraper into graceful proportions, sodded, and planted with trees. Mount Blue towered on the northern horizon twenty miles away, so he called the transformed sand knob "Little Blue."

At one place he broadened and deepened the brook into a pond, which afforded his boys a

fine opportunity for the sports of summer and winter. He built bridges, made paths, and put up wooden benches for seats, and the place became known throughout the country by the name of its chief attraction "Little Blue."

Mr. Abbott's wife died in 1843. He then went to New York where for the next few years he gave much time to teaching, but by 1850 writing had again become his main occupation.

Between 1843 and 1870, eight visits to Europe furnished inspiration for numerous travel volumes, mostly for young readers. During this period he produced fully three-fourths of the one hundred and eighty books of which he was the author. These included works that dealt with education, science, and history, but stories for children predominated. He was able to write anywhere and everywhere. Whether he was in the waiting room of a railway station, or in the seclusion of his study, and whether the time was morning or late in the evening, mattered little. He was constantly studying human life, especially child life, and often what he relates in his stories is a faithful record of real happenings.

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As Mr. Abbott grew older he was attracted more and more to the cottage at Farmington. The little tract on which it stood commanded delightful views of river and meadows, and afforded an agreeable opportunity for the gentle physical labor of making outdoor improvements, which was always Jacob Abbott's favorite recreation. At length he made "Fewacres," as he called it, his permanent abode. He enjoyed the quiet beauty of the spot, the simple manners of the community, and the independence of the retired life he led.

Here his closing years glided away. His only writings now were frequent letters to his children and grandchildren and occasional answers to correspondents, with now and then an article for a periodical. The summers were enlivened by the visits of one or more of his sons, and the grandchildren filled the house with their welcome noise. To the enjoyment of the little people he ministered untiringly, and he devised many odd and entertaining methods for their mental and moral improvement.

Toward the very end of Mr. Abbott's life the only exercise he was able to take consisted

of gentle saunterings, cane in hand, about his home grounds. His favorite resource indoors was to have his books read aloud to him, as he sat in an easy chair where he could look through a window and watch the passers-by. He had forgotten even the names of many of his books, but in listening to their contents the past was revived in a way that gave him great pleasure. The end came in the autumn of 1879, and in so far as this saved him from being "doomed to a helpless old age" it accorded with his desire.

Jacob Abbott's father had five sons, all of whom became ministers and teachers, and, with one exception, authors. It is equally worthy of note that all of Jacob Abbott's four sons developed into men of unusual ability and usefulness.

Through his writings Jacob Abbott's influence was very great and very sound, not only with youth and thoughtful adults, in America, but to a large extent abroad. It is characteristic of his juvenile fiction, which was so fascinating to the younger people in the middle of the last century, that it contains much general infor-

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mation and teaches many wholesome lessons in right thinking and right acting.

The present book is an excellent example of his work at its best. For the most part the movement of the story is quiet, but the incidents are varied, and there are some episodes which are distinctly exciting, while always there is the charm of a sincere and lucid telling that makes the events described seem very real. The leading characters are so likable, too, that the reader unconsciously feels he is in good company, and the inclination is cultivated to imitate these attractive young people in the book.

Most of the adventures are from a volume in the "Franconia Series" entitled "Beechnut," but some portions of the other books have been included to make the story complete. The editing consists chiefly in selecting what was essential, and in omitting unnecessary details and the moralizing to which writers for children of that period were prone.

CLIFTON JOHNSON.

Hadley, Mass.

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ADVENTURES OF A COUNTRY BOY



I

MARGARET AND FRANK

Near the White Mountains, in the township of Franconia there stands a farmhouse not far from the entrance to a wild glen. To this farmhouse a little girl came, early one spring, from New York. She had not been well, and her parents thought the country would be better for her health than the city. The farmhouse was the home of her aunt, Mrs. Henley. When she arrived the ground was

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covered with snow, and the wind blew rough and cold from the north. But within a few days the weather turned gentler, and one morning when Margaret looked out at the door the weather seemed so warm and pleasant that she said it was like summer.

“You can go and sit on the piazza a little while, if you would like to,” said her aunt.

Margaret said she would like to do so. The piazza was sheltered and sunny. It overlooked the garden, and beyond the garden could be seen an orchard, and beyond that were steep hills, rocks, and mountains.

Mrs. Henley got Margaret’s bonnet and tip-pet and put them on her, and then set an arm-chair on the piazza in the sunniest corner. That done, Margaret walked out to the chair, and Mrs. Henley helped her to settle comfortably in it.

“Now I shall want Carlo,” said Margaret.

Carlo was a small fawn-colored dog. He was only a puppy and had been bought recently from a neighbor for Margaret to play with. Her aunt went to the shed and got him, and when he joined Margaret on the piazza he seemed overjoyed and ran toward her, caper-

ing about and wagging his tail. Mrs. Henley returned to her housework, and Carlo sat down before Margaret and looked up very earnestly into her face.

“Carlo!” said Margaret.

Carlo replied by rapping with his tail on the piazza floor. “Jump up, Carlo,” Margaret commanded.

At the same time she patted her lap, and Carlo at once jumped up there and laid his head on Margaret’s arm. Pretty soon he shut his eyes as if he intended to go to sleep. Just then Margaret happened to glance across the garden and orchard to the hillside beyond, where, among the trees and rocks, she saw a boy. “I believe that is Frank,” said she.

Frank was her cousin, and he was nine years old, which was two years older than she was. He was coming toward the house, and presently she heard him calling to her. Carlo lifted his head and pricked up his ears. He listened intently and looked quite excited.

“Won’t you ask Wallace to come out and go with me to get our harpoons?” said Frank.

Wallace was Margaret’s brother. He was

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nearly twenty years of age, and had left his work at the college he was attending to accompany her from New York.

Margaret shook her head. Frank was now coming along through the garden on the snow. The snow was deep, but it was hard, and he could walk on the top of it. When he reached the yard he said, "Why could not you have gone and spoken to Wallace as I asked you to?"

"Oh, I am not strong enough to get about much," she replied.

"Well, it doesn't matter," said Frank; "for I should have had to come to get my sled."

Then he stood back a little in the yard, looked up to a window of the second story of the house, and called to his cousin Wallace. In a few moments the window opened and Wallace appeared.

"Will you go with me to the woods to get our harpoons?" asked Frank. "It is a beautiful day."

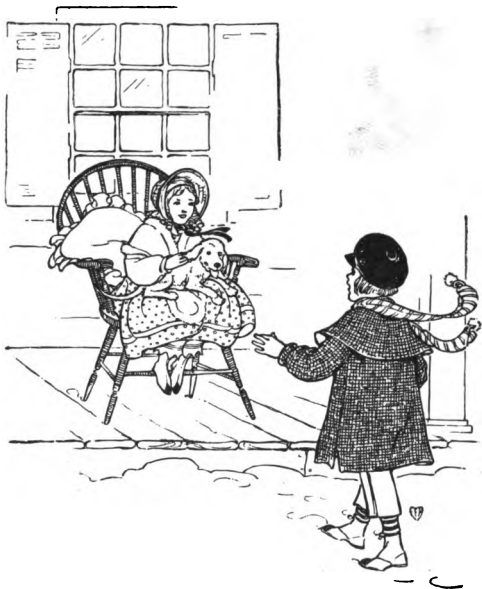
"Very," said Wallace, "I will go. We shall want an ax. Get it and be ready and I will come down in a little while."

"Cousin Wallace," said Frank, "may I take Carlo with us?"

"Yes, if Margaret is willing," was Wallace's answer.

Frank went to get his sled, and then came around to the place where Margaret was sitting. He had tied the ax on the sled with a rope. "Come Carlo," said he.

Carlo at once jumped down from Margaret's lap and ran to Frank. "What did you call Carlo away from me for?" asked Margaret in a tone of complaint.



"Why, he is going up to the woods with us," was Frank's reply. "Wallace said he might go."

"No," said Margaret, "I heard Wallace tell you that Carlo might go if I was willing, and

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I am not willing. I want him to stay with me."

"Oh, let him go with us," said Frank, "and I'll teach him to hunt. I shall see a squirrel, I know, and perhaps a rabbit or a fox, and I'll teach him to hunt them."

"I don't wish to have him learn to hunt," responded Margaret.

"And I will get you some snowdrop blossoms," said Frank.

"I don't believe there are any snowdrops yet," said Margaret.

"Yes; there are plenty of them, I've no doubt," declared Frank. "I noticed some green things growing by the rocks up where you saw me, and I am quite sure there are lots of snowdrops in the woods. I'll bring you ever so many."

Frank spoke very fast and very eagerly, and Margaret who was sick and feeble, was tired of arguing with him, though she was still unwilling to have Carlo go. She called to him, but he was so excited by seeing Frank and the sled, and by the prospect of an expedition that he would not come. So she laid her

head back in a sort of despair and said no more. Frank ran along toward the pasture road with Carlo leaping and capering about him. The dog was delighted that he was



going somewhere, though he did not know where.

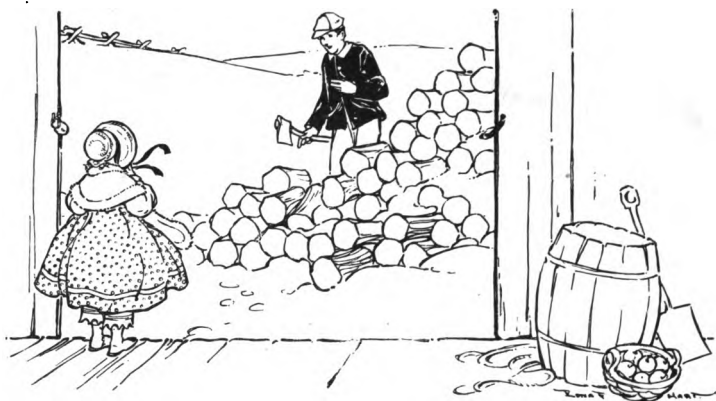
Behind the house was a great gate which gave entrance to the pasture road. This gate was wide open. It was always left open in the winter. Frank climbed up on the top of one of the posts and sat there waiting for Wallace. Carlo waited below, sitting by the sled.

"That's right, Carlo," said Frank. "You

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watch the sled and the ax, and I'll watch for Wallace."

Carlo patted the snow two or three times with his tail in response to Frank's words, and then sat quietly waiting.



II

BEECHNUT

Margaret felt very much disappointed to have Carlo go away. After a short time, however, she began to think of other things, and forgot her trouble altogether. The sun shone so cheerfully, and the fresh, spring-like air produced so invigorating an effect as to make her feel quite bright and happy.

“I think I’ll take a little walk,” said she.

So she got up and walked along the piazza. Between the piazza and the garden there was a little yard, and the snow had entirely melted away from the part of the yard next to the

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house. The ground was bare, and she stepped down on it. A plank walk led along by the side of the yard, and as she was not quite sure it was right for her to go on the ground, she went to the plank walk and passed along on it between some rose and lilac bushes on one side and a shed on the other.

At length she came to a door leading into the shed. It was shut, but she opened it and looked in. On the opposite side of the shed was a large double door which was wide open, and she heard the sound of some one cutting wood out in the yard beyond.

"I wonder who that is," said she.

She walked through the shed expecting that when she reached the double door she could see who was cutting wood, but she found that the woodpile was in the way. She thought the chopper must be a boy who worked for her aunt, and who commonly went by the name of Beechnut. As she wished very much to go where he was she began to call as loudly as she could, "Beechnut! Beechnut!"

The sound of the ax ceased, and Beechnut came around the end of the woodpile. He was

a tall boy about fourteen years of age. His real name was not Beechnut, but Antoine Bianchinetti. He had been brought up in Paris until two years ago, when his father came across the Atlantic with him to Canada.

Shortly afterwards, his father decided to remove to the United States. He took with him all the money he had, and a supply of provisions to eat by the way, and he and Antoine started to travel through the woods on foot. In the midst of the journey Antoine's father fell sick and died, and Antoine had to come the remainder of the way alone. Soon he ate all his provisions and then began to live on what the farmers would give him as he went along, and, to some extent, on the nuts he found in the woods.

In this manner he continued for two or three days and then reached Franconia. The house of Mrs. Henley was near the road, and when he came to it he sat down near the front gate on a mounting-stone—that is, a stone with a step by the side of it, which was used for mounting horses and getting into carriages. He sat there waiting for some one to see him from

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the house and come and offer him something to eat.

This was what he always did when he was hungry. He was too proud to beg. At all the farmhouses where he stopped he never would go to the door and ask for food, but would sit down on a log or a stone near the house until the people saw him. Then, if they were kind-hearted, they would come out and ask him where he was going, and if anything was the matter. If they were not kind-hearted he did not wish for their help. He would rather go on alone and live on nuts.

He had plenty of money with him, but it was all in valuable gold pieces, and he did not think that the farmers would be willing to change them. Besides, he was not sure it would be safe to have it known that he had so much money in his possession.

When Antoine reached Mrs. Henley's house he sat down and waited patiently. At last Frank saw him and went and told his mother there was a boy out on the mounting-stone with a pack on his back and a cane in his hand, as if he were a traveler. Mrs. Henley

told Frank he might go out and speak with the boy and ask him if he had been traveling far, and what his name was, and if he were hungry.

So Frank went out to the stranger and said, "My mother wants to know if you have been traveling far."

Antoine hesitated as if making a calculation. He was running over in his mind the distance from Paris across the ocean to Montreal, and from Montreal to Franconia. "About four thousand miles as near as I can tell," he said.

"What is your name?" asked Frank.

"Antoine Bianchinetti," the boy replied.

Frank studied on this singular name a moment in silence. He could make nothing of the first part of it, and he thought the second word was meant for Beechnut.

"Where are you going?" Frank inquired after a little pause.

"I don't know," responded Antoine, shaking his head mournfully.

"Are you hungry?" asked Frank.

"Yes," said Antoine, "I am hungry and tired."

Frank then went in and told his mother

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that the boy out there said that he had walked four thousand miles, and that his name was Beechnut.

Mrs. Henley laughed at the absurdity of this, but Frank persisted that it was what the boy

had told him. He might be wrong, he said, about the distance the boy had walked. "But I am very sure," declared Frank with great earnestness, "that the boy said his name was Beechnut, only he did not pronounce it very well."



Mrs. Henley sent out to invite the stranger to come in. She gave him some supper, and then becoming more and more interested in him and in his story, she invited him to stay all night.

Her husband was away from home. He had

business which made it necessary for him to travel a good deal, and the directing of the household affairs, and those of the farm also, fell largely to his wife. It happened that he returned the day after Beechnut, as Frank called him, arrived, and when he and Mrs. Henley had consulted together they decided to engage the boy to remain and work about the house for wages.

Antoine hid the money he had brought with him in the barn, and said nothing about it for some time. However, as soon as he became well enough acquainted with Mr. Henley to feel certain that he was trustworthy, he took it to him and gave it into his care. Mr. Henley was much surprised, but he received the money and put it out at interest for Antoine's future benefit.

The name Frank had given the stranger was adopted by the other members of the family; but in the village he was generally called Antonio or Antony, and some of the village boys shortened this to Tony. As he was very good-natured he did not care what they called him. He had now been at Mrs. Henley's

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house two years and was a great favorite with all who knew him.

It has already been related how Margaret called to him when he was chopping in the yard. He came around the woodpile, and she said, "I want to go where you are."

"All right," Beechnut responded, "and would you like to ride or walk?"

"Why—ride," said Margaret.

"And will you ride in a sleigh, a carriage, a cart, or on a drag?" asked Beechnut.

He was always doing or saying something which the children considered funny. Margaret smiled, and after hesitating a moment concluded to say, "On a drag."

"And how will you be drawn," said Beechnut, "by oxen, or a horse, or a locomotive, or a bear?"

"By a bear," was Margaret's answer.

"Very well," said Beechnut, and he went around the end of the woodpile and disappeared.

Margaret waited some minutes, and she was beginning to wonder what had become of him when she heard a noise behind her. She turned, and there was Beechnut all covered up with

a bearskin carriage robe, and he was crawling along on his hands and knees, growling as he came.

“Why, Beechnut!” exclaimed Margaret.

Beechnut threw off the bearskin and rose to his feet. He then went to the side of the shed and got a large tray such as is used in carrying dishes to and from the table. It was much worn



and had been thrown out from the house. Beechnut put it down on the snow and told Margaret it was her drag. He helped her to seat herself on it, and it was so large there was plenty of room.

Next he went and got a strap and fastened it to the handle of the tray. After that he wrapped himself again in the bearskin, got down on all fours, took hold of the end of the strap, and dragged Margaret along over the snow, growling all the time like a bear.

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The side of the woodpile which was toward Margaret was covered with snow, but Beechnut took her around to the other side where the sun shone warm and the snow had melted off. He drew her over the chips to a pleasant corner and placed her so that she could lean against a smooth log. Then he laid the bearskin on the woodpile and returned to his work. But he had not been chopping long when Margaret said, "Beechnut, I wish you would make me a seat with the bearskin."

So Beechnut put a short board down near the end of the log which was at Margaret's back, and supported it on two sticks to make a little bunch. He then spread the bearskin over the seat and log in such a manner as to form a sort of cushioned chair that was both soft and warm. When the seat was finished Margaret sat down on it and Beechnut once more resumed his work. He cut off several logs and split them with a beetle and wedges, talking all the time to Margaret and making her laugh.

After a while, Margaret got up and said it was time for her to go in. Beechnut told her

he was very much obliged to her for giving him her company, and that the next time she came out to see him he would make her something.

“What will you make me?” asked Margaret.

“Oh, I don’t know exactly,” replied Beechnut. “I will make you a horse or a seesaw, whichever you prefer.”

Beechnut then took Margaret up in his arms and carried her across the snow back to the shed. He put her down at the door, and she walked through the shed to the other yard and thence along the planks to the piazza and went into the house.



III

A TRIP TO THE WOODS

While Margaret was with Béechnut, Wallace and Frank had gone to the pasture. The road they took led from the house up through a wild ravine, and the pasture was an extensive region of valleys and hills with groves and thickets and open slopes and rocky precipices. In some of the dells were swamps covered with a dense growth of forest trees, and there were steep declivities feathered with dark evergreens from top to bottom. The ground nearly everywhere was covered with snow. But although the snow was in most places two or three feet deep, it was frozen hard enough in the morn-

ings before the sun had softened it, so that one could walk on it as on a floor.

Wallace and Frank were going into the woods to get some long poles to make what Frank called harpoons. Each pole was to have an iron spike driven into one end of it, so it could be used at the bank of the river to draw in the logs and boards and other things that might be floating down the stream in the spring freshets. Frank would stand at the edge of the water, and when he saw pieces of drift-wood coming within his reach he would strike his long harpoon into them and draw them to the shore. After the water had gone down he and Beechnut would cut them up and have them hauled to the house for firewood, and some evening he would build a bonfire of the brush and chips that remained.

Wallace had never been in Franconia in the spring before, and had never witnessed this kind of fishing for floating logs and boards. He had, however, heard Frank's description, and had promised to go with him to obtain some new poles.

They went along and entered the pasture.

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On one side there now rose a steep bank, and on the other side was a deep and somber-looking ravine filled with evergreen trees, some of which were so far down in the valley that the tops were below where the boys were walking. A large brook flowed at the bottom of the ravine, but it was so hidden by the trees that they could not see it. Yet they could hear the sound of the water running over the rocks.

Wallace was very much pleased with the beauties of the wild scenery around him, and he walked quietly along, observing them and musing; but Frank continually interrupted him by calling out to him from behind. At length Wallace came to where the land began to descend in the direction in which they were going. He stopped until Frank overtook him.

"You trouble me greatly," said he, "by lagging behind. Now here is a chance for you to get well before me by sliding down this hill. Then you can easily keep ahead of me going up the hill beyond, and you must amuse yourself without calling to me, unless it is for something really necessary. If you get behind me again I cannot wait for you, but shall go on

till I reach the upper woods, and when you get there you must shout and I will answer."

"I don't mean to get behind again," said Frank.

So he sat down on his sled with his feet out before him to steer, and calling to Carlo he pulled him on the sled in front of him and began to slide. When he got to the bottom of the slope where he should have stopped his sled, he noticed that to the right the descent contin-



ued. This descent looked so inviting he thought he would go on, and he guided his sled so that it turned down the hill. It went gracefully along over the swelling inequalities of the way until it came to the end of the descent, where, going slower and slower, it finally stopped.

Frank thought this had been a most delightful

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slide, and he looked back to see whether Wallace was admiring his swift journey. By this time Wallace had reached the foot of the first slope and had started to walk slowly up the ascent beyond. Frank jumped off from his sled and began to run up the hill drawing his sled after him and calling to Carlo to follow.

Wallace was often concealed from view by the rocks or by little groups of evergreen trees that came in the way, and Frank hurried along, anxious to overtake him. He was afraid he would not be able to find him after he had gone into the woods. While he was pressing eagerly forward, all at once Carlo began to run around, hither and thither, and to bark and howl in a very extraordinary manner. Presently he ran into a little cluster of bushes where he crouched down, trembling and whining, and appearing to be very much distressed.

Frank could see Wallace walking up the hill at a considerable distance, and he called to him, but Wallace, though he heard, paid no attention. Frank called again louder than before, but Wallace was tired of being called at so frequently. Besides, he had given Frank

fair notice that if he fell behind he must make the best of his way alone. So Wallace went on and paid no heed to Frank's calling.

Frank was greatly troubled and did not know what to do. He was afraid to take up Carlo and bring him along, for he thought he might be going mad. He was very unwilling to leave Carlo, and he was equally unwilling to stay by him and let Wallace go on.

At length he decided to do something without more delay, and he ran to the bushes under which Carlo was crouching, seized him in his arms and started to bring him away. He ran along a few steps, and then finding it very inconvenient to carry the dog and draw his sled, he put Carlo down hoping that now he would go with him of his own accord. But Carlo howled and whined in the most distressing manner, and presently fled under the roots of an old tree which had been overturned by the wind. There was quite a cavity between the roots and the ground, and into this cavity the dog plunged and disappeared.

Frank listened a few minutes, and as he heard nothing more he determined to make the

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best of his way to Wallace and ask him to come back and see what was the matter. He toiled up the hill as fast as he could, drawing his sled, and after a time came in sight of Wallace sitting on a stone to rest a few minutes. When he was near enough to speak to Wallace he said, "I wish you would go back with me and see what is the matter with Carlo."

"Why, what seems to be the trouble with him?" asked Wallace.

"I'm afraid he is mad," answered Frank, and he proceeded to describe the strange manner in which Carlo had acted.

"Probably he was frightened at something," said Wallace.

"No," said Frank, "there was nothing to frighten him."

"Perhaps, then, he is sick," suggested Wallace.

"Yes," responded Frank, "I think he is sick. I wish you would go with me and get him."

"We will let him stay where he is for the present," said Wallace, "while we go up in the woods and get our poles. When we come down I will go and see if we can find him."

So saying, Wallace rose from his seat and went on toward the place where they were to cut the poles. In a short time they came to a swamp overgrown with many small and slender firs and spruces. The ground was now covered with snow, and the snow was so hard that they could walk on it.

Evergreen trees like firs, spruces, and pines furnish the best wood for the poles they were after, because such trees grow very straight, and the wood is quite light. It is important to find young trees that are both tall and slender, and that have few branches along the main stem. Where trees grow singly or are scattered they are comparatively short and their branches reach out on every side; while those that crowd in dense masses in the forests form straight lofty stems with only a small tuft of branches and leaves at the top.

Wallace began to look about among the trees to find one suitable for his purpose. Frank began to look about, too, calling out continually, "Here's one, Wallace, straight as an arrow;" and, "Oh, look here, Wallace, look at this one;" or, "Here's a beautiful one, unless it is too big."

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Wallace went to see several of those to which Frank called his attention; but some were crooked and others were too short, and others too large. Presently he wearied of going to investigate Frank's discoveries, which always resulted in nothing. "You ought to look at the trees yourself more carefully," he said, "before you call to me. I don't want to come just to show you that a tree is crooked when you have eyes of your own. Don't call me again until you have examined the tree in all its points, and are fully satisfied it is just the kind we are after."

"What are the points?" asked Frank.

"The tree must not be more than two inches and a half through at the ground," Wallace explained, "nor less than one inch where it is to be cut off at the top. It must be about three times as tall as you can reach, and it must be nearly straight with few branches except at the very top."

After some searching Wallace found three trees and Frank one which answered very well. They cut them down, trimmed off the twigs, lashed them and the ax firmly on the sled,

and started for home. On the way they stopped to look for Carlo, but could not find him. He was not under the root of the great tree, and Wallace said he did not know what more to do. So they left the place and went on.

Frank was very much troubled at the loss of Carlo, but Wallace thought the dog had gone down home and that they would find him there on their arrival. He tried therefore to divert Frank by talking with him and amusing him.



When they came in sight of the house Frank remembered that he had promised to bring Margaret some snowdrops, and he had not once thought of looking for any.

“There!” said he, stopping suddenly, “I must go back, after all.”

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"What for?" asked Wallace.

"To get some snowdrops," Frank replied.
"I promised Margaret some snowdrops."

"But it is not time for them," said Wallace.
"There will not be any for a fortnight."

"I think I could find some," said Frank,
"if you would go with me."

"I have no more time for play," was Wallace's response.

"Well, I must go," Frank declared; "for I promised them to Margaret."

"All right," said Wallace, and he walked on.

"He is going to his studies," Frank remarked to himself. "He is always studying. I would not be in college and have to study so much for anything."

Frank stood a moment in the middle of the road with a countenance expressive of disappointment and vexation. Then he left his sled and went back up the hill; but as soon as he was out of sight of the house it began to seem very lonesome. He thought of Carlo, too, and imagined he might be mad, and if so that he would bite him.

"Besides," said Frank, "I am too tired to go

away up into the woods again, and I don't think I should find any snowdrops, if I did go. Wallace says there are none, and he knows. But perhaps I can find some up among these rocks. I mean to climb up and see."

He turned off from the road and climbed up among the rocks to a spot where the snow had melted off. There he sat down and began to throw little stones down the hill. While he was amusing himself thus he found a small stone which was quite transparent and pretty. He called it a diamond and determined to carry it home and give it to Margaret instead of the snowdrops. He also found some green moss, and pulled up a small bunch. He was sure that Margaret would like the diamond stone and the moss together better than the snowdrops. So he climbed down the rocks with the stone and moss in his hands and went on toward home.

As he approached the house he looked to see if Margaret were in sight; but she had gone in and was asleep. She always had a nap in the middle of the day because her health was so feeble, and Frank did not see her till the

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middle of the afternoon. He spent a good deal of time searching for Carlo, hoping Wallace was right in thinking the missing dog had run down home; but Carlo was nowhere to be found.





IV

THE SEARCH FOR CARLO

Frank had a lesson to study every day after dinner in Wallace's room. He was required to spend an hour at this lesson, and he had a table at which he sat near one of the front windows. Wallace had a table on the opposite side of the room next to the fireplace.

Frank went to Wallace's room as usual on the day of the excursion to the woods, and began his work, but thoughts of Carlo came continually into his head and interfered seriously with his studies. At last he turned to Wallace and said, "Cousin Wallace, I wish I had

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sent Beechnut up after Carlo when we came down. He would have found him, perhaps."

"Yes," was Wallace's response, "that would have been a very good plan."

"May I step out now and ask him to go?" said Frank.

"Yes," replied Wallace.

Frank accordingly left the room, and soon found Beechnut. He gave him an account of Carlo's strange conduct and closed his narrative by saying that he had no doubt Carlo had run mad in the woods, and begged Beechnut to go and see what had become of him.

Beechnut listened till Frank had finished his story, and then exclaimed, "Mad! nonsense! He smelled a fox or some other such animal. That was all. He is so young that probably it was the first time he ever had smelled a wild animal, and he did not know what to make of such an odor. I'll go and get him."

Frank described the place where Carlo had hid under the tree roots, but said that he and Wallace had looked when they came down and he was not there.

"But he is sure to be somewhere near,"

said Beechnut. "I'll get my snowshoes and go after him at once."

"You don't need the snowshoes," said Frank. "The snow is very hard."

"It was hard this morning," responded Beechnut, "but it is soft now."

This was true. The warm sun had been beating on the snow and had softened it so that Beechnut would have sunk to his armpits in some places if he had attempted to go over it. He soon started off with the snowshoes in his hands. It was not necessary to put them on until he reached the deep snow. For a considerable part of the way either the ground was bare, or else there was a road where the snow was hard-trodden.

Frank wished very much to go with Beechnut, but he knew that could not be because it was his study hour. He was on the piazza about to enter the house when a village boy named Arthur came into the yard and asked where Beechnut was. Arthur was one of Beechnut's particular friends, and Frank told him about the loss of Carlo and the errand on which Beechnut had gone.

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"I will help to find Carlo," said Arthur. "Which way was Beechnut to go after he got into the pasture? Never mind; I can track him."

So saying, he ran up the pasture road as fast as he could go and soon disappeared. Frank then went back to his lessons. After studying pretty diligently for about a quarter of an hour his attention was arrested by hearing some one softly open the door. He looked up and saw Margaret coming in. He wished to avoid speaking to her about the dog. So he turned his eyes back to his book and appeared to be very busily engaged with it.

Margaret came to the table where he was sitting and stood there a moment expecting that he would look up; but Frank went on studying. "I want to speak to you," said Margaret.

This she said in a very low and gentle voice so as not to disturb Wallace. Frank did not respond, except by shaking his head slightly, and continued to study. Margaret was very much troubled, and she turned toward Wallace intending to appeal to him.

Frank then said, "Here, Margaret, come

back. You may speak to me if you wish to."

"I want to know where Carlo is," said Margaret.

"He did not come home with us," said Frank. "He thought he would stay up there a little while. But Beechnut has gone to get him. I brought you a beautiful diamond stone and some moss, and hid them under the piazza. I will go and get them as soon as my studies are done."

"I don't want the diamond," said Margaret. "I want Carlo."

"Well, Beechnut has gone for him," said Frank, "and I expect that they will be here any minute. If you go and look up the pasture road, I dare say you will see them coming now."

"But why did you leave Carlo up there?" Margaret asked.

"Oh, he smelled a fox," Frank replied, "and I suppose he stayed to catch it. Very likely he has caught and killed it by this time. If he has, Beechnut will bring down Carlo and the fox together."

"I don't believe he has killed any fox,"

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Margaret declared despondingly. "More likely the fox has killed him!"

So saying, she turned and went away. Frank attempted to resume his studies, but he was so anxious and uneasy that he found it difficult to command his thoughts. He was constantly looking out of the window, hoping to see Beechnut. At length his study hour was finished. He shut up his books, walked over to Wallace's table, and leaned on it with his arms crossed waiting for Wallace to speak to him.

Wallace laid down his pen and said, "Well, Frank?"

"Do you think Beechnut will find Carlo?" Frank asked.

"I don't know," replied Wallace.

"If he doesn't, I might buy Margaret another dog," said Frank.

"Can you get another?" Wallace questioned.

"Yes," said Frank, "there is another just like Carlo at the place where he came from."

"Have you any money to buy him with?" inquired Wallace.

"Yes," Frank answered.

"How much have you?" asked Wallace.

"I have four dollars and a half dollar and three quarters," replied Frank; "and besides that Beechnut owes me two cents."

Wallace said no more, and presently took up his pen as if he were going to write. So Frank went away.

Beechnut did not return until nearly dark, and then he came without Carlo. He said he had found the tree with the roots torn up, and the very place under it where Carlo had hid, but Carlo himself was not there. He and Arthur had tracked Carlo for some distance on the snow until they lost the tracks on a patch of bare ground, and though they had searched for a long time they did not see anything of Carlo, nor could they find the continuation of the tracks.

Frank then told Margaret that he was very sorry he had lost her dog, and that he would go the next day and buy her another, and she might go, too, if his mother would let Beechnut take them in the sleigh. His mother consented, and it was arranged that they should set out on the following morning.

Margaret thought at first she could not like

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any other dog so well as Carlo; but the pleasure of going in the sleigh to buy the new dog went far toward comforting her.

Whenever Beechnut had anything to do for the children he always contrived to do it in a way that amused them or excited their astonishment. As he was a boy of excellent sense he never adopted a plan that was dangerous, or that would cause Mrs. Henley any uneasiness. On this occasion, when Margaret asked Beechnut, after breakfast, what sleigh he was going to use for them to ride in, he replied that he was not going to take them in a sleigh, but on a horse sled.

“We shall have a carpet on the sled,” said Beechnut, “and not only a carpet, but some sofas; and not only some sofas but a canopy. Come into the barn and see.”

So the children went with Beechnut to the barn and there they found the sled. Beechnut climbed into a loft by means of a ladder and threw down five bundles of straw. He placed two of these on each side of the sled, and the fifth across the end behind. “There are your sofas,” said he.

"I don't like the sofas very well," was Margaret's comment.

"Wait a little," said Beechnut, and he brought three or four buffalo robes, which he spread down on the floor of the sled in such a manner that they extended over the bundles of straw.

The straw was thus concealed from view entirely and the sled presented a very inviting surface of soft buffalo robes, hollow toward the center like a nest. There are your carpet and sofa coverings all in one," said Beechnut.

"Now, I like the sofas very much," declared Margaret. "Let me try them."

"Stop a moment," said Beechnut, "until I place the bearskin for you to sit on."

So he brought the bearskin, and after he had adjusted it, Frank and Margaret tumbled into the nest he had prepared for them, while he went to the shop and got three narrow strips of board about five feet long. Near each of the ends of the strips he bored a hole, and then fitted them on the top of the sled stakes so that they extended across from side to side.

Next, he got from the stable a horse blanket

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which he spread over the strips of board for a canopy. He tied the blanket to the tops of the posts with twine and said, "There, we will call the sled our palanquin."

Beechnut now hitched on the horse and drove around to the door. He placed a box



in front for his own seat, and made ready a basket with a cloth tied over it in which to bring the new dog safely home.

Their destination was a farmhouse, two miles up the glen. The day was sunny and pleasant, but as soon as the party had fairly entered the glen Margaret began to feel cool.

So she said she was going to get under the bearskin to keep warm and asked Frank to tell her about everything they passed on the way.

She lay down with her head on a bundle of straw and covered herself entirely, and Frank began to tell her what he saw.

"We are going along the road," said he, "with rocks and a high hill on one side, and woods on the other. Now we are coming to the mill. I can see the big wheel going round and round and hear the water roaring."

Margaret sat up and looked at the mill. It was a sawmill, and there were logs all about the yard. As soon as the sled got opposite the mill she could see, inside, a monstrous saw sawing a log. Margaret soon lay down under the bearskin again, and shortly afterwards Frank said, "We are nearly to the schoolhouse at the corner, and some of the children are looking out of the windows at our sled."

Beechnut drove rapidly onward, and turning at the corner drove down a road that descended into a hollow and crossed a bridge. "I can

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see the mill pond," said Frank, "only it is covered with ice and snow. There is a man at the far side driving a yoke of oxen. He is driving down on the ice."

"Let me see!" exclaimed Margaret eagerly, and she threw off the bearskin.

The oxen were drawing an immense log which was going to be sawed at the mill. Presently Beechnut and his companions arrived at the farmer's house where they were going for the dog. They drove into a spacious yard surrounded with sheds and barns. A young man was at work in the yard, and Frank called out to him, "We have come to buy Tom. Will you sell him to us for half a dollar?"

"Why, what have you done with Carlo?" asked the young man.

"We have lost him," replied Frank. "He ran off in the woods. I suppose he saw a fox and went to catch it. Will you sell Tom to us?"

"Perhaps so," said the young man; and he began to whistle and chirp, and to call, "Tom, Tom, Tom! Here Tom!"

But Tom did not come. "He is somewhere

about," said the young man. "If you look for him, Frank, you will find him."

"All right," was Frank's response. "Margaret, you go with me; won't you?"

In the meantime Beechnut had been hitching the horse to a post, and while the children went to find Tom he stood talking with the young man. Frank and Margaret first visited the barn, and there they looked into the cow stable, and then Frank wanted to go into the horse stable. But the horses were in the stalls, and Margaret was afraid.

"There is no danger," said Frank.

"They are kicking horses, I know," Margaret declared. "They are kicking now."

"No," said Frank, "they are only stamping."

But Margaret turned round and walked away. So Frank followed her. They passed through the barn and came out in a pleasant yard beyond. A girl was walking across the yard carrying a basket of chips toward the house. Frank asked her if she knew where Tom was.

"Yes," she replied, "he is sunning himself on the front steps."

The children immediately ran to the front

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of the house, and there they found Tom lying at his ease on a great flat stone step. He lifted his head and pricked up his ears when he saw

the children, but he did not move otherwise.

"Ah, Tom," said Frank, "why did you not come when we called you?"

"He is not obedient," said Margaret. "I don't like him."

"Oh, you can make him obedient," said Frank. "You can teach him."

"I'd rather have Carlo," said Margaret.

"But Tom is exactly like Carlo," affirmed Frank, "exactly. You would not know the difference."

His reasoning, however, did not satisfy Margaret. Though there might be no difference in the outward appearance of the dogs,



Carlo knew her and would come when she called him. Tom was a stranger, and she could not at once transfer her fondness for the one to the other just because they looked alike.

Frank advanced toward Tom and called him. Tom got up, but he did not seem much inclined to come. Then Frank walked backward whistling to him and calling, while Margaret walked behind the dog and attempted to drive him, saying, "Go along, Tom. You must go along!"

In this manner they contrived to get him around into the yard where they had left Beechnut and the farmer's son. Here, after some further conversation, they succeeded in completing the purchase. They gave the young man half a dollar and put Tom in the basket. Tom was very unwilling to go in, and tried to jump out when he was in. Beechnut prevented this by tying a cloth over the top of the basket. They set the basket back on the sled, climbed on themselves, and then turned the horse round and drove out of the yard.

On the way home Margaret sat up under the canopy looking about. For some minutes

she watched the basket which contained the dog. Tom struggled a little from time to time in an attempt to escape, but when he found this was of no avail, he became quiet. He was so still that Frank said he believed the dog was asleep.

Just before reaching the bridge they overtook a boy driving a pair of steers, and the steers were drawing a drag which had a barrel fastened on it. The boy guided his steers out to one side of the road so as to make room for Beechnut to pass, and stood looking at the palanquin with great curiosity and wonder. As it came opposite him Frank nodded, and said, "Hello, Andrew, does it run well to-day?"

"First rate," was Andrew's reply.

"Does what run well?" asked Margaret, as they went on.

"The sap," said Frank, "the sap from the maple trees."

He then explained to Margaret that the maples had sweet sap, and told how the people in that part of the country were accustomed to bore holes in these trees and drive in hollow spouts, beneath which they set

buckets on the ground. The sap ran out through the spouts and dropped into the buckets. When the buckets were full, the men would pour the sap into a barrel and haul it home on a drag. The sap was then put into a monstrous kettle and boiled till it turned into sugar.

“Look over there,” said Frank pointing to the woods on one side of the road; “you can see the buckets at the foot of the trees. Those buckets are full of sap, or getting full—sweet sap.”

“Are there any maple trees growing about your house?” Margaret asked.

“Yes,” Frank answered, “and we will make some sugar. I can whittle some spouts, and Beechnut shall tap the trees.”

Soon after this they approached the schoolhouse and saw the children in the yard at play. “It is recess,” said Frank.

Some of the children ran out to the road to look at the palanquin, and in order to let them see it better Beechnut stopped the horse. But most of the children were standing at the side of the schoolhouse and were looking into

a hole in the wall under the building. Frank and Margaret wondered what they found there to interest them. A boy was walking along toward the hole with a stone in his hand.

"Joseph," said one of the little girls in the group to this boy, "you shall not stone him."

The girl stamped her foot and spoke very sternly. Another boy was kneeling before the hole, holding out his hand with a small piece of bread in it and calling, "Here, Pompey, Pompey, Pompey! Come here, Pompey! Poor Pompey!"

"It is a dog named Pompey," said Frank.

Just then the dog's head appeared at the mouth of the hole. It was fawn colored, and Frank exclaimed, "I verily believe that is Carlo!"

So saying, he began to call, "Carlo, Carlo!" and sprang out from under the canopy and ran toward the schoolhouse.

It really was Carlo, and as soon as he heard Frank's voice he ran out from the hole and commenced leaping on him with the utmost delight. Margaret was almost as much excited as Carlo at this unexpected meeting. She

called to Frank to bring Carlo to her, and as he came along very slowly she wanted to get down from the sled and go to him herself. But the sun had melted the snow by the side of the road where the sled was standing, and the place was wet.

Beechnut, therefore, drove on into the schoolyard. Carlo then jumped up on the sled, and curling down as close to Margaret as he could get, he looked up into her face and wagged his tail.

"I am so glad," said Margaret. "I like him a great deal better than Tom."

Frank asked the children how Carlo came to be under the schoolhouse. They said he was lying on the steps when they came to school that morning, and when they tried to catch him he ran under the building. They called to him, but he would not come out, and Mary Bell put some of her luncheon in the hole for him. They found at recess that he had eaten the food, and they were trying to have him come out and get some more.

Mary Bell, who was about twelve years old, was standing back a little way, and Beechnut

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spoke to her and said, "Mary, would not you like to have a ride in this palanquin? You can take as many of the others with you as you choose to invite."

Several of the girls began to say very eagerly, "Me, Mary, me! me!"

Mary looked around on the children and said, "I would like to have them all go, if there is room."

"Plenty of room," said Beechnut. "I'll leave Frank and Margaret here till we come back."

"Well, stop a minute," said Mary, and she turned and ran toward the schoolhouse.

The children began to dance and caper with delight. "She's gone to ask the teacher," said they, "but the teacher will surely let us go."

Beechnut took Margaret out of the palanquin and seated her on the doorstep. He also lifted out the basket containing Tom. Mary Bell soon came from the schoolhouse and said the teacher was willing the scholars should have the ride. So the girls and smaller boys clambered on the sled, while the older boys clung

to the sides, standing on the runners and taking hold of the stakes to keep from falling off. When all was ready Beechnut took his seat on the box in front, and away they went.

Margaret on the doorstep, holding Carlo in her lap, watched the party drive off with



great interest; and Frank was occupied sometimes in gazing at the crowded palanquin, and sometimes in peeping into the basket to see Tom.

The children on the sled filled the air with shouts of laughter as they left the schoolyard, and with screams, half of fear and half of fun, whenever the vehicle inclined to one side or the other a little, on account of the inequalities of the way, so as to suggest the idea that they might possibly be upset. Presently the road

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wound into the woods and they disappeared from view.

But in a little while they could be heard returning, and Margaret and Frank saw them emerging from the little opening where the road entered the woodland. Some of the boys had fallen off and were running behind trying to overtake the sled and regain their places. They were, however, laughing so heartily that they could not run very well, and all the children who were on the sled were laughing, too, and calling to Beechnut to drive faster, and clapping their hands.

As Beechnut drew near to the schoolhouse he slackened his horse's pace enough to allow the boys to get on the sled once more, and when he drove up to the door they were all riding. The sled stopped, and the children got off saying they had enjoyed themselves very much.

Frank and Margaret then took their places under the canopy, and Beechnut put the basket on the sled. On the road home, Margaret said to Frank, "I shall not want Tom now. Hadn't we better carry him back?"

"No," said Frank, "I don't suppose they would take him back. I am going to ask my mother to let me keep him for my dog."

This he did as soon as they reached home, and she consented. So, after that, Margaret had her dog, and Frank had his.



V

A SNOWSTORM

Margaret grew steadily stronger. She was out of doors a great deal, rambling about in the mornings on the hard snow; and later in the day, when the snow became soft, she would play on the piazza, or talk with Beechnut while he was at his work. The weather was all the time getting warmer, and the snow was fast disappearing. One day Margaret found some little green leaves beside a walk in the yard. Beechnut came by as she was looking at them, and she asked him how much longer he thought the snow would last.

"I don't know," replied Beechnut. "We

may have more before this is gone. In fact, I think it looks as if there might be a snowstorm gathering now."

Margaret turned her eyes toward the sky and saw that it was hazy, especially toward the south. The sunshine was gradually becoming dimmer, and within half an hour the air grew so cold that Margaret went into the house. The sky was gray, and darkness came that night much earlier than usual. When the children went upstairs to go to bed the storm had begun. Margaret looked out of a window. "O dear me!" she exclaimed, "the garden is covered deep with snow again. The flowers will all be killed."

"No," said Frank, "they don't care for the snow. I'm glad to have such a storm. We shall have a good time going to break out the roads."

"Shall we?" said Margaret.

"Yes," was Frank's response, "if we have snow and drifts enough. I hope it will snow all night, and blow—oh, how I hope it will blow!"

It did snow all night, and in the morning, when Margaret awoke, the snow was piled up

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against the windows so that she could scarcely see out of them. As soon as she was dressed she went downstairs and found Frank in the sitting room. They both looked out of the window a few minutes, and then Margaret sat down on a low stool by the fireplace and began to play with Carlo. Tom was asleep on the other side of the hearth.

“Oh, Margaret,” said Frank, “come here and see the drops run down on the glass.”

“I have seen them already,” replied Margaret, “and I know what makes them run down.”

“What is it?” asked Frank.

“Why,” said she, “it is because the glass is warm and melts the snowflakes that strike against it outside.”

Margaret had received this explanation from her aunt before she came downstairs. Frank put his hand on the glass. “It is not warm,” said he. “It is cold.”

“No,” said Margaret, “it is warm. My aunt told me it was warm, and she knows.”

“But come and feel it yourself,” urged Frank, “it is as cold as ice.”

"I don't wish to feel it," said Margaret. "I know it is warm because my aunt says it is."

Frank then left the window and went toward Margaret saying, "Just come and feel;" and he took hold of her arm to pull her along.

At this instant the door opened and Beechnut came in bringing an armful of wood for the fire. "What's the matter?" he inquired.

"Frank won't leave me alone," replied Margaret.

"She says the glass of the window is warm," explained Frank, "and I want her to feel it."

"One of you says it is warm, and the other says it is cold; is that it?" asked Beechnut.

"Yes," Frank answered.

"I'll go and see," said Beechnut.

So he laid down his wood and then he put his hand in his pocket and took out a mitten.

"What are you going to do?" asked Frank.

"I am going to put this mitten on in case the glass should be so hot as to burn me," Beechnut replied.

He advanced very cautiously toward the window, reaching his hand out as if he were

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afraid he might get burned. In fact, he mimicked so perfectly the appearance of a boy about to touch hot iron that Frank and Margaret forgot their dispute and went to see what he would do.

Beechnut put his hand on the window, and the instant he touched it he caught his hand away, crying out, "Oh, how hot!" Then he added, "I believe I'll try it without my mitten."

So saying, he drew off his mitten and touched his bare hand to the glass. Immediately he jumped as if he had been burned, and began to caper about the room shaking and blowing his fingers and making such droll faces of distress that Frank and Margaret filled the room with shouts of laughter. Beechnut danced and hopped along to the door, opened it, and disappeared. But the instant he passed out he resumed his ordinary appearance and walked just as if nothing had happened, in the soberest manner possible, through the kitchen past Mrs. Henley who was busy there preparing breakfast.

Margaret followed Beechnut and found him

in the shed taking down more wood from a pile. "Was it really hot, Beechnut?" she asked.

"Ah," responded Beechnut, shaking his head, "if you could only see my fingers—all blistered!"

"But was it hot, really?" said Margaret. "Tell me."

"Well," said Beechnut, "you and Frank come here into the shed, after breakfast, and I'll settle the dispute for you."



Margaret assented to this and went in and told Frank. She found him relating the story of the dispute to Wallace who had just come downstairs. Wallace put his hand on the glass

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and said, "Certainly the glass is not so warm as the hand, and it therefore feels cold when we touch it; but it is warmer than the snow, and as a result the snow that gets against it is melted."

"But it is cold when we feel it," said Frank.

"Yes," Wallace agreed, "or rather it feels cold to the hand."

"There!" exclaimed Frank, turning to Margaret. "I told you so."

"I am not going to talk about it any more," said Margaret. "Beechnut says he will settle it after breakfast."

When they had eaten, Margaret put on her bonnet and shawl, and she and Frank went to the shed. Beechnut was piling wood. The doors of the shed were all shut to keep out the storm, which was beating incessantly against the building as if the wind and snow were trying to get in. Some of the snow had been driven through the crack beneath one of the doors and lay there in a little drift. Frank and Margaret made snowballs from it and then went to Beechnut to get their dispute settled.

"I'll read the law about disputes out of the Code Antonio," said Beechnut.

The emperor Napoleon caused a body of laws to be framed which became very celebrated all over the world, and was called the Code Napoleon. It was in imitation of this name that Beechnut called the laws which he announced from time to time to Frank and Margaret the Code Antonio.

He put his hand in one of his coat pockets, took out a small book, and after turning the leaves began to read. "Chapter forty-eight. Of Disputes. Section First. If two brothers get into a dispute it is the older that is in the wrong; for he ought to be the wiser, and disputing among children is folly."

"But we are not two brothers," said Margaret.

"Section Second," continued Beechnut, still looking on his book. "If a brother and a sister get into a dispute it is the brother who is in the wrong, for he ought to be too polite to dispute with a lady."

"But we are not a brother and sister," said Margaret.

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"It comes pretty near it," commented Beechnut, shutting the book.

"Let me see your book," said Frank as Beechnut was putting it in his pocket.



"No; but I'll tell you what I will do," was Beechnut's response.

"Yes, tell us," said Frank.

"If you and Margaret will pile wood for me one hour, I'll tap some maple trees for you."

"When will you tap them?" Frank questioned.

"The first good day," replied Beechnut.

"Well, Margaret," said Frank, "let's do it."

Margaret assented, and the children worked for an hour piling wood very industriously.

Beechnut always adopted much this same mode whenever he attempted to settle a dispute between Frank and Margaret. He amused them at first by some original device to excite their interest and curiosity, or to make them laugh, and then contrived to turn their attention off from the subject of dispute into a wholly new channel.

That afternoon, when Frank's lesson hour was over, he came down into the sitting room to play with Margaret. The snow still continued to fall, and the two children saw that it was getting very deep in the yard. The garden gate was entirely covered by a great drift. Frank presently sat down beside the fire to teach his dog Tom to "speak," as he called it. He held a piece of bread up above the dog's reach and tried to make him bark for it by saying, "Speak, Tommy, speak!"

Tom would seem very anxious and uneasy, and would whine and make all sorts of disagreeable noises and finally bark. As soon as he barked Frank would give him the bread, and then, breaking another piece from a slice he had in his lap, he would start the same lesson

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again. While he was engaged in this manner, Beechnut passed through the room, but paused to ask Frank what he was doing with his dog.

"I am teaching him to speak," replied Frank, and he broke off another small piece of bread, held it up high, and said as before, "Speak, Tommy, speak!"

Tommy wiggled and jumped about and whined, but being perhaps a little disturbed by the presence of Beechnut would not bark.

"He would speak a minute or two ago," Frank declared.

"I am glad he won't now," said Beechnut.

"Why? Don't you think it is a good plan to teach him something?" asked Frank.

"Yes," Beechnut replied; "but I should teach him something useful, and not disagreeable tricks."

"What would you teach him?" Frank inquired.

"Oh, I don't know," said Beechnut. "Perhaps I should teach him to draw like a horse. If you teach both the dogs to draw, they might help you get your sap to the boiling kettle when you make sugar."

Beechnut now left the room on his way to the barn. Frank was very much pleased with the idea of teaching the dogs to draw, and after talking with Margaret about it a few minutes he concluded to go out and ask Beechnut how it was to be done. He found him in the barn leading out the horse from its stall.

"Where are you going?" asked Frank.

"To the post office," replied Beechnut.

"Ho!" said Frank, "that is in the village, a mile away. You can't get there."

"I can try," Beechnut responded, and he put a folded blanket on the horse's back and fastened it on with a long strap. Then he mounted.

"Aren't you going to have a bridle?" Frank questioned.

"No," said Beechnut, "a halter is bridle enough for me when I have the Marshal to ride."

The Marshal was very handsome and very spirited, but so well trained that Beechnut could control him by a halter as well as by a bridle.

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"Before you go," said Frank, "I wish you would show us how to teach our dogs to draw, and make us a harness."

"No," responded Beechnut, "it would take me half an hour to do that."

"And how long will it be before you get back from the post office?" asked Frank.

"It will take me at least an hour to go and come," said Beechnut, "if the drifts are as deep as I suppose."

"I mean to go and ask Wallace to ride to the post office," said Frank, "and then you can stay and help us."

"Very well; but tell him it is your plan and not mine," rejoined Beechnut.

Frank ran into the house and soon came back accompanied by Wallace, who had a cap on his head, and his coat buttoned up to his chin.

"I am afraid you will find it very hard getting to the post office, Mr. Wallace," said Beechnut.

"I expect to find the roads blocked," Wallace responded; "but I would like to go very much, notwithstanding—only I believe you must give me a saddle and bridle."

Beechnut dismounted, saddled and bridled the horse and delivered him to Wallace. He then opened one half of the great barn door, and Wallace sallied forth into the snow. Beechnut and Frank stood watching him. The wind howled among the tops of the trees, all traces of the road had disappeared from view, and



even the tops of the fences were in many places covered. Beyond the road the whole landscape was concealed by the falling flakes that were driven furiously by the force of the gale.

As the Marshal advanced through the yard the snow was so deep that he could scarcely wallow through it. When he approached the gateway Wallace found that the whole line of the fence at that point, gateway and all, was

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entirely hidden by a monstrous drift. The horse pushed into this drift, the snow growing deeper and deeper at every step. When at length it came up to his shoulders he could go no farther. He struggled a moment and stopped.

Wallace then got off his back, and leaving him went on ahead trampling the snow down with his feet and attempting to break a way through the drift. He advanced very slowly, but finally succeeded in getting through the deepest of the snow and then turned to the horse, which had followed close behind. "Now, old fellow," said he, "I think you can carry me once more."

He mounted, and the horse plodded on until the flying flakes concealed him from the sight of Beechnut and Frank who had continued to watch from the barn door.

"I wish I had asked Wallace to let me go too, riding behind him," said Frank.

Beechnut did not reply, but shut the barn door, and then he and Frank went into the house to begin teaching the dogs to draw. First, Beechnut made the harness. Each harness consisted of a collar of soft leather and

two long straps, one on either side, to serve for traces. They used Beechnut's drag for a cart and only hitched up one dog at a time. Carlo learned the faster; but before Wallace returned, either of the dogs would go very well across the room drawing the drag after him.

Beechnut said that Frank and Margaret must teach them more every day, and thus by the time the snow hardened so that they could commence the sap boiling, the dogs would make a very good team. He then went away.

Frank was tired of training the dogs, and he said he would go and cut some stems of elder bushes to make sap spouts. Margaret told him the snow was too deep, but Frank thought not. So he put on his boots, and with a pair of leather straps fastened his trousers down about his ankles to prevent the snow from getting up under them. He then went out on the piazza which led to the yard behind the house, while Margaret stood at the window to see.

He waded along through the yard, looking around continually toward Margaret and tumbling down purposely into the snow to make her

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laugh, and wallowing about here and there wherever the snow was deepest. But, as he advanced in the direction he had to go to reach the elder bushes, he found the snow so deep that he could not get along. It came up to his waist. He turned toward Margaret and stood still, laughing. Suddenly, he pointed at something out among the trees of the garden.

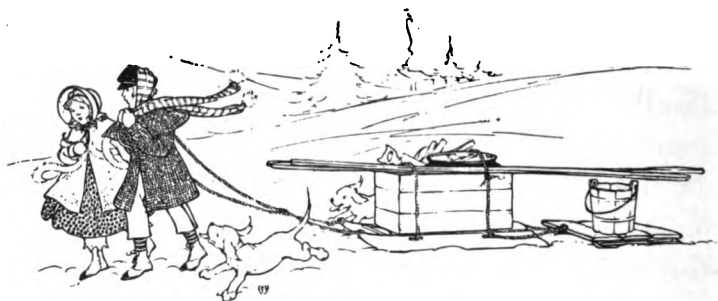
Margaret pushed up the window a little and asked, "What is it?"

"Snowbirds," Frank called back.

Margaret put the window down to keep out the blustering storm, and Frank waded forth from the drift and came toward the house. As soon as he got to the piazza he began to stamp about its floor, shaking and brushing the snow off his clothes. He then went to the window where Margaret was and shouted that he was going to get the snowshoes.

Off he went to the shed and soon returned with the snowshoes on his feet. He started again to go to the elder bushes, but though he no longer sank in the snow, the shoes were so large that it was extremely difficult for him to

manage them. He staggered on very awkwardly, and Margaret watched him until he passed around the corner of the house. Then her attention was attracted in another direction, for Wallace was coming in from the post office, whitened from head to foot.



VI

SUGAR MAKING

It was nearly a week before the snow which fell in the great storm had become so solid that Frank and Margaret could walk on it. By then Carlo and Tom were well trained to draw, and in order to be sure that they could draw a load of sap, Frank practiced them in the yard drawing a pail of water. The pail was of tin, and it had a cover to keep the water from spilling.

Beechnut said the trees they were to tap were on the bank of the river not far away, just above where a brook emptied into it. He tapped six of them the day before the children were to go down, and he gave par-

ticular directions as to what they were to do in collecting and boiling the sap.

Frank was to draw down all the things that were necessary on one of his hand sleds. He did not let the dogs draw them, for he wished to save their strength, as he said, for the sap. First he put on the sled a large box which was to hold the things going down, and to be turned bottom upward and serve for a table when on the spot. Into this box he put a kettle, a number of sticks of wood, a short iron chain, and a small saw. The saw was to cut up for fuel dead branches of trees and other wood such as they might find along the river.

In the kettle were some pieces of kindling wood, and a small box of matches. To the top of the box, after the other things had been put in, he tied three poles about six feet long. The drag was attached by its rope to the back of the hand sled that it might be taken along at the same time. In the bottom of the tin pail was a paper with some slices of bread and four oranges tied up in it, and accompanying this parcel were two saucers and two spoons.

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These spoons and saucers the children intended to use in trying the sap from time to time, as the boiling went on, to see whether it was growing sweeter.

When all was ready the whole party set off from the house, with Carlo and Tom running before the sled and frisking about in great glee. "Ah," said Frank, "you dogs little know the hard work you have got to do to-day hauling sap."

The children crossed the brook by a bridge a short distance from its mouth. They did not need to use the bridge, for the stream was frozen over quite solid, but a pathway led across it and down to the beach where they planned to build their fire. The ground on the beach was nearly bare, most of the snow having been blown off by the wind. Margaret and Frank easily found a protected spot, where they could have their fire, on the smooth and dry surface of the sand.

Frank stopped with his sled when he reached this spot and said, "While I am building the fire, Margaret, you can be putting the harnesses on the dogs."

He at once began preparations for the fire, and Margaret took one of the harnesses from the drag and called to Carlo. But Carlo saw the harness in her hand, and as he knew very well what it meant he would not come. Margaret went toward him to catch him, and he bounded away from her and ran out on the river. "Oh, dear me!" Margaret exclaimed, "what shall I do?"

"Never mind," said Frank, "I'll catch him for you by and by."

So Margaret sat down in the shelter of the bank, on a seat Beechnut had made there in the summer, and watched Frank build the fire. He had taken the three poles from the sled, set them up so they formed a sort of tripod, and tied the tops together. Then he fastened the chain to the poles where they joined, letting one end with a hook attached hang down half way to the ground.

"There!" said he to Margaret, "when I put the kettle on the hook, it will be just far enough above the fire."

He selected the two largest sticks he had brought, placed them parallel to each other

under the tripod and laid kindlings between them, and the rest of the sticks across them. Finally, he hung the kettle on the hook, and then he said, "Now we will go and get the sap."

It was not without considerable difficulty that he caught the dogs. They both preferred running about on such a pleasant morning, rather than being harnessed to a drag and compelled to draw a heavy load. Frank, however, with Margaret's assistance, succeeded at last in catching them and harnessing them to the drag. That done, he and Margaret set out after the sap. They went along the river, following the shore up a little way, and very soon came to the trees Beechnut had tapped for them.

To their great delight they found the dishes almost full of sap, and they lifted each in turn carefully and emptied it into the pail. When they finished they put the cover on the pail and started to return. The dogs pulled well and took the load along in a very satisfactory manner.

As soon as they arrived at the camp they

poured the sap into the kettle and Frank lighted the fire. Next they unharnessed the dogs and set them free, and then taking the hand sled and the saw they went along the banks to get a load of wood. Frank sawed



off the dead and dry branches of the trees, and Margaret put them on the sled.

With this wood they kept the fire burning finely for some hours until almost all the water of the sap was boiled away, and what remained became a thick sweet syrup. They kept tasting from the kettle during the boiling process,

taking out a little in their spoons and cooling it in their saucers. Finally they concluded to put some on their bread, and they found it very nice. In fact, the sweeter and thicker the contents of the kettle became the more they ate, until, at last, Frank, who had gone to the kettle for a fresh supply, said in a tone of great despondency, "Why, Margaret! our maple syrup is almost eaten up."

Margaret herself looked in, and it was plain that what Frank had said was true. They concluded, since it was so nearly gone, they would eat the rest of it and postpone making any maple sugar until the next day. So they spread what syrup remained on their slices of bread and ate it. Then they put away their saucers and spoons under the box and called Carlo and Tom.

They were about to start for home when Margaret reminded Frank that they ought to go around to the trees and collect the sap again; for Beechnut had told them to collect it twice a day, or the dishes would get more than full. But Frank was tired, and he did not feel inclined to work any more with the

sap that day. He did not believe, he said, that the dishes would get full; "and besides," he added, "perhaps we shall come this afternoon and collect it."

His reasoning satisfied Margaret, and they went up the path and across the bridge to the highway. Little streams of water produced by the melting of the snow were running along the road, and they were obliged to select their way very carefully. It was just dinner time when they reached home.

Frank found that he had no inclination to go in the afternoon to collect the sap. He got engaged in other occupations, and then, too, after eating so large a quantity of maple syrup as he had that morning his interest in sugar making and in everything that pertained to it had very much abated.

About sunset, after supper that night, as he was sitting in the doorway of a small workshop near the barn, Beechnut came along and entered the shop. Frank was making a windmill. He had already given Beechnut an account of how he and Margaret had spent the morning, and now he said, "Don't you

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think we managed pretty well in our sap boiling?"

"*Pretty* well," replied Beechnut.

"I think we managed *very* well," said Frank.

"You managed very well in all respects but one," Beechnut responded; "and in that you managed very badly."

Frank supposed that Beechnut referred to their having eaten all their syrup without waiting for it to turn into sugar. He paused a moment and then said, "Yes, I told Margaret that we ought to have saved some of it for mother."

"Oh, I don't mean that," said Beechnut.

"Then where was our bad management?" Frank inquired.

"In not collecting the fresh sap before you came home," replied Beechnut.

"But we were going down this afternoon," explained Frank.

"And have you been down?" Beechnut asked.

"Why—no—" Frank answered hesitatingly. "I was too tired."

"Then I suppose," said Beechnut, "that

some of the dishes are full and running over, and they will continue to run over all night. No matter if you were tired, you ought to have taken the pail and gone around to the trees and emptied all the dishes, and then have carried the pail and put it safely under the box. To-morrow morning you would have had a double supply, for the dishes would all be full again by that time. I advise you to go and empty them now."

"It is too late," said Frank.

"No," said Beechnut, "the sun is half an hour high, and you could do the whole business in half an hour. It will be some trouble, and yet not nearly trouble enough."

"What do you mean by that?" Frank asked.

"It will not be trouble enough to punish you properly for having neglected to do it at the proper time," responded Beechnut. "When you are a man, if you manage your business in such a way as that, you will get everything behindhand and in disorder. You had better learn to do things as they should be done while you are a boy."

Frank knew this was very good advice.

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But, because he was so much interested in his windmill and because he was unwilling to go to the shore alone, he concluded to let the sap run. He did not think many of the dishes would get full, and he would go down and gather the sap early in the morning. Margaret would go with him then, he said.

He did not, however, feel satisfied or happy. In his fancy he could see the dishes full to overflowing, with the sap running down the sides on the snow or among the leaves and moss which covered the ground, and this caused him a good deal of mental discomfort.

It turned out as Beechnut had predicted, for when Frank and Margaret went to the riverside in the morning they saw plainly that much of the sap had gone to waste during the night. They were more careful afterwards, and when the weather favored a generous run of sap, they gathered it twice a day.

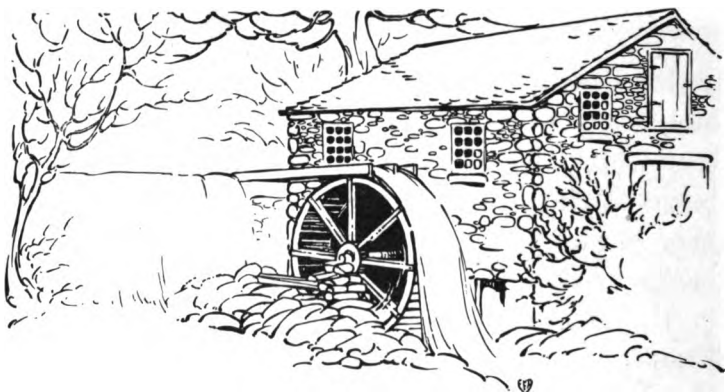
On the whole they did very well, but at last their sugar-making operations were brought to a sudden termination. They had been boiling most of an afternoon, and when the supper bell called them home they got their things to-

gether and left them as usual on the beach. It had begun to rain a little after supper, and at bedtime they heard it raining very hard.

The first thing in the morning Frank went to his window, and, behold, there was a great freshet. The river had risen rapidly, the ice had broken up, and the big cakes were hurrying down the stream grinding and crushing one another as they went.



A few days later, when the water had subsided, Frank visited the beach. Everything he had left there had been swept away.



VII

AN ADVENTURE AT THE MILL

When Frank returned to the house from the riverside he saw Beechnut opening the big barn doors. "Are you going away anywhere?" asked Frank.

"Yes," replied Beechnut, "I am going to the mill."

"May I go with you?" said Frank.

Beechnut had a great many bags of grain to carry, and the roads were bad. He thought at first that his load would be quite heavy enough for the horse without Frank. Then, too, he was going in a wagon, for the roads were bare in many places so that a sleigh

would not run well, and he was afraid if the load was too heavy the wagon might upset. However, Frank did not weigh enough to make much difference, and as he evidently wished to go very much, Beechnut gave assent.

"And may I take my fishpole?" said Frank. "The ice must have broken up below the mill, and perhaps I can catch a pickerel while the grist is grinding. May I take it?"

"No," said Beechnut.

"Why not?" asked Frank.

"I will tell you why not as we go along on the way," responded Beechnut.

Frank went into the house and put on his coat, and then passed out through the shed into the barn. He found Beechnut hitching the horse to the wagon. Frank immediately began to help hook the traces and buckle the straps, and then he did what he could to aid Beechnut in putting on the heavy bags of grain. When all was ready, the two boys took their seats on the top of the bags and rode out of the barn.

As soon as they were fairly on the road,

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Frank took a fishline from his pocket and looked it over to see if it was in good order.

"I told you that you must not bring your fishline," said Beechnut.

"No," responded Frank, "you said my pole. That was what I asked about."

Beechnut laughed.

"And now tell me," said Frank, "why you would not let me bring my pole so as to fish while the grist is grinding."

"Because," said Beechnut, "I am not going to wait at the mill while the grist is grinding, to-day. I am coming right back."

The boys rode along steadily, though slowly, until they came to the mill. Frank was pleased to see that below the dam the water was almost entirely open for some distance. There was a path leading down to the stream, and when the wagon stopped, Frank jumped out and said that he was going down to the water to play till Beechnut was ready to start for home.

"Very well," said Beechnut, "only be careful."

Frank went down to the shore. The water

was open in the middle of the stream between the dam and a bridge, not far below, and for some rods beyond. There was a great deal of ice, however, along the banks, and in one place a large and very thick cake of ice was lodged against the shore at a point of land which projected a little into the stream.

"I think that cake of ice is strong enough to bear me," said Frank to himself.

He took up a stone, half as large as his head, and swinging it with all his force he threw it out on the cake of ice. The stone came down with a crash, but did not break through. The ice was, in fact, nearly a foot thick.

"It is strong enough to bear twenty men," said Frank, and he stepped boldly on the ice cake and walked toward its outer edge.

In the meantime Beechnut had been taking the bags of grain from the wagon and carrying them into the mill. He had just finished this task when his attention was arrested by loud outcries from the stream. Frank was shouting as loudly as he could, and in a tone expressive of the utmost distress and terror.

Beechnut ran down the bank. The great

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cake of ice with Frank on it was slowly floating out into the stream. "I am sailing away!" cried Frank. "What shall I do? Come quick! Oh, come quick!"

"That is nothing," said Beechnut.

"What is nothing?" asked Frank.

"Why, sailing away on such a cake of ice as that. Push in to shore here and let me get on, too."

"But I can't push in to the shore," said Frank. "I have nothing to push with. I don't know how I shall ever get to land again. What shall I do?"

Beechnut knew very well that Frank could not push in to the shore. He simply wanted to show that he was not himself alarmed about Frank's situation. His words had the effect that he intended. Frank was at once relieved of his extreme terror, and yet he felt a great anxiety still.

Beechnut sat down on a rock near the edge of the water. The ice meanwhile had floated slowly out into the stream and was moving toward the bridge.

"Oh, dear me," said Frank, "what shall I do?"

"There are plenty of ways of getting to the shore," replied Beechnut. "All you have to do is to choose which you think is best."

"What ways?" Frank asked.

"Well," said Beechnut, "the first way is for you to step off into the water and wade to the shore. It is not much deeper than your knees."

"O Beechnut!" said Frank, "it is up to my middle."

"Even if it is," responded Beechnut, "you can wade easily enough."

"But it is dreadfully cold," Frank objected. "What other way is there?"

"You can wait till you float down to the bridge," answered Beechnut, "and when you are passing under you can seize hold of the timbers and climb to the roadway."

"No, I would not dare to do that," declared Frank.

"Then you can wait," said Beechnut, "till you have floated through the open water to the solid ice down the stream. It is not far."

"I would not dare do that either," said Frank. "I could not get off my cake of ice."

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I should fall in among the loose pieces where the water is deeper than it is here."

"You might sail down on the ice as far as it goes," said Beechnut, "and stay there until I can get a boat and come and take you off."

"And how long would that be?" inquired Frank.

"Not more than half an hour, I think," Beechnut replied.

"Oh, I can't stay on the ice as long as that!" said Frank.

The ice was now turning slowly round and gradually advancing to where the current was more rapid. "O dear! O dear!" cried Frank, "I am going."

"Have you your fishline in your pocket?" said Beechnut.

"Yes," Frank replied.

So saying, he felt eagerly in his pocket and took out the line. "Here it is," said he.

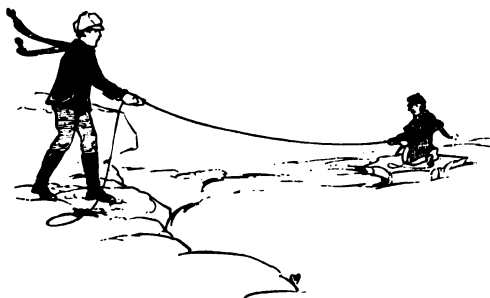
"Throw it over to me," ordered Beechnut.

Frank threw the line, which was wound on a short stick, to the shore, and Beechnut picked it up. He immediately unwound it and broke it off from the stick. Then picking up a small

stone from the beach he tied that to the end and tossed it over into the stream beyond the cake of ice."

"There," said Beechnut, "take up the line and hold on."

Frank did so, and Beechnut at the same time firmly grasped the shore end of the line. "Now pull gently," said Beechnut.



Frank did as he had been directed, and Beechnut at his end of the line pulled gently, too. The ice soon began to feel the influence of the new force thus made to act on it and was brought gradually to land. As soon as the edge touched the shore Frank jumped off and was safe.

"Now," said Beechnut, "wind up the fish-line and come up to the wagon."

They presently had started for home, and as they were riding along Frank said that he

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did not see what made the cake of ice float away. "It rested on the shore," said he, "and I thought that my going on it would press it down more firmly and make it certain to stay where it was."

"But when you went toward the outer edge," said Beechnut, "your weight pressed that side down and lifted up the other side a little so as to loosen it from the shore, and that set it adrift."



VIII

THE ENCAMPMENT

Before the snow had entirely gone, Arthur and some of the other village boys formed a plan of going up into the woods and making a camp. The time fixed for this expedition was Saturday afternoon. The reason for deciding on that particular day was because Beechnut was always at liberty at that time, and they wished to have him accompany them. Mr. Henley thought a boy of Beechnut's age ought not to be kept at work too constantly, and he accordingly allowed him Saturday afternoon as a regular holiday. Beechnut

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could then play, or go on excursions, or fish, or do anything that he pleased.

The village boys liked to have him with them, he was so ingenious in devising plans, and so good-natured and accommodating. He generally assumed the whole charge of the arrangements, and the boys submitted very readily to his rule.

One secret of his success in securing the obedience of the boys was his giving them all employment. He would create offices so as to furnish each of the boys, especially the more forward and active of them, with plenty to do.

There was a certain boy named Parker who was of a rather proud and independent spirit, and therefore not much disposed to submit to authority. Beechnut usually gave him some military command, and called him general. He would issue his orders to him in a very decided tone, like a king giving orders to the commander in chief of his armies, and Parker was pretty sure to obey very readily, feeling quite exalted in view of the dignity of the office which he held.

Beechnut also took care of the little boys,

giving them something to do which pleased them, and made them feel as if they were of consequence, as well as larger boys. Thus all parties were contented and happy.

When the boys came, two or three together, to propose to Beechnut that they should go up into the woods and encamp the next Saturday afternoon, he said in reply, "Yes, I would like that very much. Give notice to all the boys who are going, to meet me here at one o'clock. They must bring their sleds, and every boy must bring as much as he will want to eat."

"What kinds of food shall they bring?" asked Arthur.

"Just what they please," replied Beechnut, "and it can be cooked or not cooked. If it is not cooked, we can cook it in the woods by our camp fire. Every boy must wrap up his ration in a piece of paper and write his name on the outside. I shall appoint a quartermaster to take care of the stores when you get here. Is Parker going?"

"Yes," answered Arthur.

"Well, tell him to get a company ready, and to have them all armed and equipped.

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He may take such boys as he chooses, but not more than four. Have you any flags?"

"I have two," said Arthur.

"And Frank has one," said Beechnut. "That will be enough. Bring your two flags and tell the boys to be sure to be here by one o'clock."

The next Saturday the boys began to assemble long before the time appointed, so deeply interested were they in the expedition. When all had arrived, Beechnut conducted them to the great gateway behind the house. This gateway gave entrance to the pasture road and was a convenient place for organizing the expedition.

He then proceeded to make the arrangements which he had previously determined on in his own mind. He appointed Parker commander in chief of the forces, and directed him to call out his men for a rear guard. Besides the rear guard, he said he must have a corps of pioneers; that is, men to go before and remove any obstructions which might hinder the progress of the expedition. He appointed Arthur to command the pioneer

corps, and asked him to choose four good strong boys to go with him on this service.

"Now for the quartermaster's department," said Beechnut.

The name of the boy whom he fixed on for quartermaster, was Gilbert—a large and somewhat clumsy lad, but good-natured and accommodating. "You must take care of all the stores and provisions," said Beechnut, "and you can choose four good men for assistants."

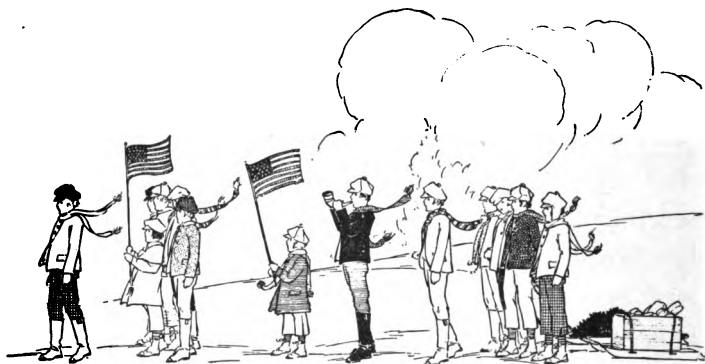
Gilbert seemed much pleased with his appointment and at once chose his helpers. There were now three boys left—the three smallest. Frank was one. The names of the other two were James and Lawrence. "These three are the standard bearers," said Beechnut.

So he gave the flags to the three small boys and appointed them their stations. James was to march with the pioneers, and Frank with the rear guard. The third boy, Lawrence, was to march in the center of the column, directly before Beechnut himself.

Beechnut then directed the quartermaster to

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send two of his men with one of the sleds back to the barn to get some buffalo robes



which he told him were hung up there. They were to take them down, fold them up carefully, and lash them on the sled with a cord, and then come back.

Gilbert selected two of his men for the service, and they went away toward the barn.

“Now,” said Beechnut, addressing Gilbert again, “send another man into the yard near the house, and there, under the great apple tree, he will find a sled with a box fastened on it. Let him bring it here.”

The messenger was dispatched, and as soon as he returned with the sled, Beechnut di-

rected all the boys to carry the parcels containing their provisions to Gilbert, in order that he might pack them all safely in the box. Gilbert performed the duty of receiving and stowing these parcels with great zeal,



and by the time this work was completed the other boys came with the sled and buffalo robes.

Then Beechnut stationed the pioneers along the road with their captain at the head and the standard bearer in the middle. Next came Beechnut with his standard bearer. Behind them was the quartermaster's department with the loaded sleds. Each sled was drawn by two men. Gilbert marched at the head of them, and was to assist in going up steep ascents, or in surmounting any other difficulties which might occur on the way. After the quartermaster and the train of baggage came the rear guard with Parker at the head.

All was ready, and Beechnut took out a small brass hunting horn from his pocket,

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saying, "This is my trumpet. Whenever I blow one short blast, it is a signal for you to stop. If I blow two blasts, it means that you must march on. If I blow one long blast, it means you must come together to my standard, wherever that is. I shall have occasion to blow the long blast when you are scattered about in the woods after we get to our camping place. If I blow a great many short blasts, it means that you must retreat. If I blow three blasts very quick and short, it means that the enemy is close on us, and you must run for your lives."

He put the trumpet to his lips and blew the signal for marching, which consisted of two short sounds, and immediately the column started. On they went up the pasture road. Several times Beechnut blew his trumpet to stop the column on one pretext or another, and then, after a pause to let the men rest, he would blow the signal for an advance. He stopped frequently at points where there was something remarkable in the spot itself, or in the scenery around, and giving the place some distinguished name which the boys were

familiar with in their geographies, he would call for three cheers. These cheers the boys would give with great energy, waving their caps in the air and making the woods and hills around ring with their shouts. Thus he kept the company in a state of continual animation all the way.

When they reached the woods, Beechnut chose a place for the camp in the margin of a grove of trees where there was a small opening looking toward the south and west. The sun shone into this opening very pleasantly. Beechnut began at once to make preparations for building a fire, and set the boys at work collecting sticks and fragments of decayed stumps and roots. This was a somewhat difficult task, as the sticks were often partly buried in snow and frozen down; yet nearly all the boys engaged in the work with great alacrity.

Parker, however, did not seem inclined to do his share. He walked away very independently and took his seat on a rock that was near. Another boy, named Thomas, whose temperament was somewhat similar to Parker's,

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joined him, and there they sat quite at their ease.

“Parker,” said Gilbert at length, “why don’t you come and help us get some wood? Do you think that all the rest of us are going to work for you?”

“Attend to your own business,” Parker retorted, “and I will attend to mine.”

Gilbert then went to Beechnut and complained of Parker’s “laziness,” as he termed it, and called on Beechnut to make him do his share of the work.

“No,” said Beechnut, “if he is not willing to do his part, never mind. We can build a fire big enough for ourselves and for him, too.”

Parker perceived plainly that the boys were dissatisfied with him, and that they were expressing unfavorable opinions of his conduct, and this made him begin to cherish unfriendly feelings against them. “I’ll let them know,” said he to his companion, Thomas, “that I will do as I have a mind to.”

So saying, he rose from where he had been sitting and walked very deliberately toward the fire; for while these things had been taking

place the boys had collected quite a pile of fuel, and the quartermaster had kindled a blaze under one side of it. Parker went to the fire, and taking the sled which had the buffalo robes on it, he drew it to the best



place before the fire and sat down on the robes, which made a very soft and comfortable seat. Thomas, who had followed him, stood by his side.

Gilbert looked toward Parker and exclaimed gruffly, "Get off that sled, and let me have those buffalo robes. I'm quartermaster."

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Parker made no reply and took no notice of Gilbert whatever. By this time a general feeling of excitement and indignation was beginning to manifest itself among the whole party. Beechnut perceiving that the case was becoming serious, went to the fire, followed by the other boys.

"Parker," said he, "we brought those buffalo robes up here to spread on the snow around our fire to sit on. We want them, and you ought to get up and give them to us."

"Well," responded Parker, "I will, by and by, when I have done warming my feet."

Thomas laughed a little when Parker said this. The other boys looked perfectly grave. Beechnut hesitated a moment, and then he turned around to go away, saying, "Boys, come with me."

The boys all followed him except Thomas and Parker. Beechnut led them to a spot where they could consult together out of Parker's hearing. The boys gathered around him and he said, "We have got into a difficulty. What do you think we had better do?"

The boys did not answer.

"We have a right to our own buffalo robes," said Beechnut, "so we might go and pull them away and tumble Parker on the ground."

"Yes," said several of the boys, "let us do that."

"Another plan," continued Beechnut, "is to resolve that we will not speak a word to either Parker or Thomas all the afternoon. We can go back to the fire and keep on with our business and not answer their questions or speak to them, or pay any attention to them whatever.

"There is one other plan, which is to overlook the thing entirely. We can return to the fire and treat Parker and Thomas just as if they were both doing right; that is, we can get some hemlock branches to spread down on the snow, and leave Parker and Thomas to sit on the robes as long as they please. In the meantime we can talk to them, so far as there is occasion, exactly as if nothing had happened."

Some of the boys preferred one plan, and some another. At last they asked Beechnut which he thought was best.

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"I think they are all good plans," replied Beechnut; "but I think the last is the best. At any rate that is the one which we will adopt. Let us go back to the fire and see who will be most good-natured."

While the boys had been holding this consultation, Parker, from his seat on the buffalo robes had been watching them with great curiosity. He knew very well that they were consulting about him, and wondered what measures Beechnut would decide to adopt. He felt self-condemned for his conduct, and was half inclined to get up and go away, leaving the property which he had seized, to its rightful owners.

The boys came to the vicinity of the fire, and without taking any special notice of Parker and Thomas, and, on the other hand, without exhibiting any desire to avoid them, went to work breaking off the small branches from the hemlock trees around and strewing them on the ground and snow on the windward side of the fire. Parker watched this operation a minute or two until he saw what the boys were doing. He inferred that they

had decided to leave him to himself, and he felt that he had been placed in a foolish and ridiculous position.

He was greatly perplexed to know what to do. To continue to sit where he was seemed very awkward. To get up and help the boys strew hemlock branches appeared more absurd still. While he was puzzling over these perplexities Beechnut looked round on the carpet of boughs which the boys had made and said in a tone of satisfaction, "There, that will do very well. Now, quartermaster, go to the baggage train and get out the rations, and let your assistants distribute them to the men."

The paper parcels were accordingly taken out of the box, and by dint of a great deal of going to and fro and calling of different names were delivered to their owners. In the midst of the distribution Gilbert came toward the fire with Parker's parcel in his hand. Thomas had gone to the box and procured his.

"Here is your ration, Parker," said Gilbert.

Receiving his ration under these circumstances made Parker feel worse instead of

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better. The boys gathered around the fire and began to open their parcels. Some took out apples and set them down before the fire to roast. Others made holes in the embers and put in potatoes which they had brought and then covered them with ashes.

Parker felt ill at ease, and presently, when he thought the boys were not observing him particularly he rose from his seat, assuming as careless and unconcerned an air as possible, and sauntered away. After a time he came back to the fire from another direction and sat down among the boys. They answered him when he spoke, and spoke to him themselves occasionally, acting toward him as if nothing had happened. He had a great mind to tell them that they might have their buffalo robes, but he was a little ashamed to speak of the subject. He hoped that when they saw he had abandoned them they would take them of their own accord.

In a few minutes Beechnut said, "Parker, have you done with those robes?"

"Yes," replied Parker.

"Well, boys," said Beechnut, "then we will

take them and spread them on these boughs to make softer seats for us."

But the boys said that the seats were soft enough, and they decided that they would make a throne for Beechnut with the robes. So they went to the box in which the provisions had been brought up, took it off the sled and placed it on its side against a small tree near the fire. They spread the buffalo robes on this seat and insisted that Beechnut should have it for a throne.

Things being arranged thus the boys went on with the work of preparing their dinners or warming their feet by the fire, while Beechnut sat on his throne and amused them by relating various entertaining stories. The trees sheltered them from the wind, and yet, as the place was open toward the south, the sun shone in, making the encampment very warm and pleasant, independent of the influence of the fire.

The boys enjoyed themselves very much, and the difficulty with Parker was gradually forgotten, until he joined by degrees in the conversation.

At length the time came for setting out on the return home. The boys were somewhat dispersed, many of them having gone into the woods in the neighborhood of the encampment, and Beechnut blew a long blast of his horn to call them back to the camp. When they were all together he gave the necessary orders for packing the baggage and preparing to march.

"And now," he said in conclusion, "I must appoint a new captain of the guard; for my old captain has rebelled and deserted."

"No," said Parker, "I have not deserted."

"Why, suppose an officer refuses to obey orders and leaves the ranks," said Beechnut, "don't you think he is a deserter, even though he does not go away, but remains loitering about the company?"

"I don't know," replied Parker, hesitatingly.

"Are you willing to be tried?" asked Beechnut. "If you are willing to be tried we'll have a court-martial."

"Yes, yes," said all the boys, "let us have a court-martial."

"No," said Parker moodily, "I am not going to be tried."

"Very well," responded Beechnut, "then you are dismissed. You cannot join any of our parties again till you have been tried by a court-martial for this rebellion."

In returning home, the boys took a different course from the one by which they had ascended to the woods, and on their way they came to a brook which was pretty broad, and quite deep, with steep banks on either hand. They expected to cross this brook on the ice, but they found water along the margin on each side and other indications that the ice was not strong.

Beechnut tried the ice with a pole. So did Parker. Beechnut said he thought it was strong enough, but he was not sure, and he thought they had better make a bridge. Parker said he knew it was strong enough, and only cowards would be afraid to go over it.

Beechnut made no reply to this taunt; but selecting two trees which grew near the bank, he began to cut into the stem of one of them near the ground, intending to fell it across the stream. He used an ax he had brought lashed to one of the sleds. As the work of felling the tree proceeded, all the boys

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except Parker took part in the labor, each in his turn. Parker sat on a log near by, making sarcastic remarks to ridicule what he called the folly of having the boys work so hard to build an unnecessary bridge.

The boys, however, went on patiently with their task. The trees were felled across the stream and rolled together, and the whole company, with the exception of Parker, passed over on the bridge which they had prepared.

Parker, with a careless and unconcerned air, then stepped out on the ice. It settled a little, but seemed strong enough to bear him. "There," said he, "I told you there was no need of making a bridge."

Beechnut and the other boys stood looking on from the opposite bank. "See," said Parker, stepping along toward the middle of the stream, "it would bear a loaded team."

He took a few steps more till he had nearly reached the bank, and began to spring up and down on the ice to show how strong it was.

"Look out!" said Beechnut.

The caution came too late. The ice, though it perhaps would have borne Parker if he had

walked gently over it, suddenly gave way, and down he went all over into the cold water. Beechnut ran to the edge of the bank. "Boys," said he, "catch hold of my arms; quick!"

So saying, he lay down with his face toward the ground, reached out his arms, and the boys grasped them. He crept backward in this position till his legs reached to the hole broken in the ice. Parker had come strangling and struggling to the surface, and when Beechnut's heels came within reach he gripped one of them convulsively with all his strength.

"Now pull away, boys!" cried Beechnut. "Pull away! All together!"

The boys obeyed and dragged him and Parker out on the snow on the bank. Both scrambled to their feet, Parker nearly choked with the water he had taken in.

"Here you are," said Beechnut, "half a mile from home, and drenched with ice water. You must keep yourself warm or you will catch cold and perhaps be sick. You have got to run for your life, but we will keep you company. Run, boys!" he continued, setting out at the same time himself, "run for your lives. The enemy

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is after us. Quartermaster, hold on to the baggage and run!"

The boys at once began running along the bank of the brook, and Beechnut every now and then raised the horn to his lips and blew a succession of short and quick blasts, the signal for retreat. Parker took the nearest road which led to the village. The rest of the company went down to Mr. Henley's barn, where they put the sleds and tools and buffalo robes all carefully away, and then went home.





IX

A TALK AND A WALK

Wallace's home was in the city of New York, but he often spent his college vacations at his Aunt Henley's in Franconia. During these vacations he was in his room a good deal of the time reading and studying. This, as it seemed to Frank, was very absurd, since vacations, as he maintained, were meant for play and not for study. It is true that Wallace went out often to take long walks, or to ride on horseback; still, it appeared to Frank that Wallace was almost continually at his studies.

One pleasant summer morning Wallace was at his books as usual in his room. The window was open, and the birds were singing

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in the trees of the yard. Presently, in came Frank and Margaret. Frank had come to see if he could persuade Wallace to go down to the river and get a boat and go fishing. He leaned on the edge of Wallace's table and began to look at a blank book in which Wallace had been writing. Margaret went and sat down on a little library stepladder which Wallace kept in the room.

"Oh, dear me!" said Frank with a long sigh, "I wish, Cousin Wallace, you were not quite so fond of studying all the time."

Wallace smiled.

"And I suppose you wish that *I* were a little *more* fond of it," continued Frank.

"Oh, no," said Wallace, "I am always afraid when I see a small boy too fond of study."

"Why?" asked Frank.

He was quite surprised to hear Wallace express such an opinion.

"Because boys of your age, if they are in good health, are always more fond of play," was Wallace's reply.

"Well, I am sure I like to play best," said

Frank. "I rather think that I am in pretty good health."

"Yes," responded Wallace, "and I am very glad of it. Every child, until he is at least ten years old, ought to like to run about and play. That makes him grow strong and rugged. After he is ten or twelve it is time for him to begin to like to study."

"I mean to tell my mother that," said Frank, "so she will let me play all the time."

"I did not say that you ought not to study," said Wallace. "Boys should begin to learn long before they are ten years old, and in order to learn they must study; but they cannot really be expected to like it."

Just then Frank happened to notice that the open pages of the book Wallace had before him contained a description of the process of making sugar in the West Indies. "We made some sugar last spring," said he, "out of the sap from the maple trees."

"How much did you make?" asked Wallace.

"The first day, we ate it all up, trying it while it was boiling," Frank replied. "But afterward we made some and carried it home."

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“Was it good sugar?” Wallace inquired.

“Yes,” said Frank, “only it was candy rather than sugar, and a little bitter, for we burnt it.”

Frank said this with a very grave face, as he recalled to mind the disappointment which he experienced at finding his candy was burnt; but Wallace could not help laughing.

“In the West Indies,” said Wallace, “they do not make sugar by tapping trees to get the sap. They make it from the juice of the sugar cane. They grind the cane in mills and press out the juice by means of heavy machinery.”

Wallace then showed Frank a drawing of a sugar mill that he had copied from a picture in the book. After looking at the sketch a moment, Frank remarked that he did not think Wallace could draw very well. “Beechnut can make pictures a great deal prettier than this,” he said.

“I would like to see some of his drawings,” said Wallace. “Have you any of them?”

“No,” was Frank’s answer; “but I can get him to draw me something, if you wish. I will go now.”

"Well, I wish you would," said Wallace.

"Then will you go fishing with me?" asked Frank.

Wallace took out his watch, reflected a moment, and said he would go, provided the drawing was a good one.

"But who is to decide that?" Frank questioned.

"I'll decide it," responded Wallace, "or no, Margaret shall decide; only Beechnut shall draw it offhand, and you are not to tell him it is for me."

"All right," said Frank. "He is out in the garden. If you will give me a pencil and paper I'll go and ask him."

So Wallace gave Frank a pencil and a piece of thick white paper, which he put between the leaves of a thin flat book that it might not get rumpled in carrying. The children went to the garden where they found Beechnut raking out the walks. When Frank told him that he came to ask him to draw a picture, he said he would do so if Frank and Margaret would in the meantime go on with the raking. This they agreed to do. Beechnut then took

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his seat on a stone bench and went to work with the pencil. In about a quarter of an hour he called them and said the picture was ready.

The children at once came to see it. He had drawn an old washerwoman with a basket filled with children instead of clothes, and she was hanging the children out on a line. Under the picture was written,

MRS. PHIDGETT,
and beneath that there was this couplet:

“Whenever she washed her children she hung them out
to dry,
Because she thought, if she left them wet, they’d all
catch cold and die.”

The children looked at the picture very attentively a minute or two and read the writing that was under it, and then, laughing heartily, they ran off with it to Wallace.

Margaret decided that it was a very good picture, and Wallace, after putting it in the table drawer, got up, and he and Frank went down to the river to fish.

About an hour later, as they were returning to the house from their fishing, they met Beech-

nut and Margaret just starting to walk to the village on an errand. Frank asked them to wait a minute till he could run and ask his mother to let him go too. His mother was willing, and he soon rejoined Beechnut and Margaret and went along in their company.

After a time they came to a place where there was a high and steep sand bank by the side of the road, with a number of swallows' nests in it. Not far away was a house in which a boy named Alfred, but who was commonly called Hal, lived.

When Beechnut and his party came in sight of the sand bank they saw Alfred and another boy at play on it. The boys had cut steps with a case knife in the hardened sand which formed the face of the bank, and by this means they had climbed up to one of the swallow's holes. When they noticed Beechnut coming they climbed down and began to saunter carelessly along the road.

"Hello, Hal!" said Frank, as soon as he got near enough to speak. "What have you been doing there?"

"Stopping up a swallow's hole," replied Hal.

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He was standing now at the side of the road. In one hand he held the case knife. With him was another boy whose name was

James, though he was usually known as Jimmy.

"What did you stop it up with?" asked Frank.

"With a bit of sod," Alfred answered.

"Are the swallows in there?" inquired Margaret.

"I don't know," said Alfred, "but they have a nest in there."

"Then Chippeday was right after all," remarked Beechnut.

"What do you mean by that?" Jimmy asked.

"Why," said Beechnut, "one evening just



before sundown recently, I passed this spot, and two swallows were playing around here. By and by they stopped their play and lighted on the fence and began to talk about where there would be a good place to make a nest. One's name was Twit and the other's name was Chippeday."

The children gathered nearer to Beechnut as he began his story, and stood listening with earnest attention.

"'Let's make our nest in this bank,' says Twit.

"'No,' says Chippeday, 'see that house over there!'

"'And what of that house?' asks Twit.

"'A boy lives in it,' replies Chippeday.

"'That's nothing,' says Twit. 'We'll make our nest so high in the bank that he can't reach it.'

"'He'll climb up,' says Chippeday.

"'Then we will dig so far into the bank that he can't reach in,' says Twit, 'even if he does climb up.'

"'He'll contrive some way or other to tease us, you may depend,' says Chippeday.

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“When the swallows had talked so far they stopped. I had been standing perfectly still for fear I should frighten them away, and I continued to stand motionless, hoping they would talk some more.

“Presently Twit asks, ‘Hasn’t the boy a house to live in?’

“‘Yes,’ answers Chippeday.

“‘And hasn’t he a good bed to sleep in?’ asks Twit.

“‘Yes,’ says Chippeday.

“‘And hasn’t he a father and mother to take care of him?’ says Twit.

“‘Yes,’ says Chippeday.

“‘Well,’ says Twit, ‘it can’t be possible that a boy who has a good house to live in, and a good bed to sleep in, and a father and mother to take care of him, can begrudge a pair of swallows a little hole in a bank with a few straws and feathers in it for a nest. Besides, they only want it three or four weeks, just till they get their young swallows big enough to fly.’

“As Twit finished speaking she sprang into the air, touched Chippeday a light tap on the

top of his head with the tip of her wing, and Chippeday flew after her. Away they went first high over the tree tops, and then down to the ground—this way and that, and round and round. Sometimes Twit chased Chippeday and sometimes Chippeday chased Twit, and sometimes they would start flying straight forward together to see which could go the fastest.

“Twit came up to the bank presently and fluttered and perched against a little hollow in it where she thought there was a good place to begin a nest; but when she had made a few scratches, away she went with Chippeday after her. They flew about a while racing and chasing, and then Twit came back and dug a little farther into the bank. In a few minutes, however, away she dashed again, shooting through the air like an arrow. So, finding that they were not going to work very steadily, I went along.”

“Is that all?” asked Margaret.

“Yes,” Beechnut replied, “I thought at the time that Twit had the best of the argument in respect to a boy’s begrudging a pair of

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swallows their little nest; but it seems that Chippeday was right after all!"

So saying, Beechnut began to walk on, and Margaret and Frank followed him, while Alfred and James remained standing in the road.

"Beechnut," said Margaret, "I wish you would go and let those poor swallows out."

"Perhaps I don't need to," responded Beechnut.

As he walked along he turned occasionally to look at the boys, and presently he stopped entirely. Jimmy had gone to the bank and was working at the swallow's hole. Alfred remained in the road, and they heard him saying to Jimmy, "I wouldn't."

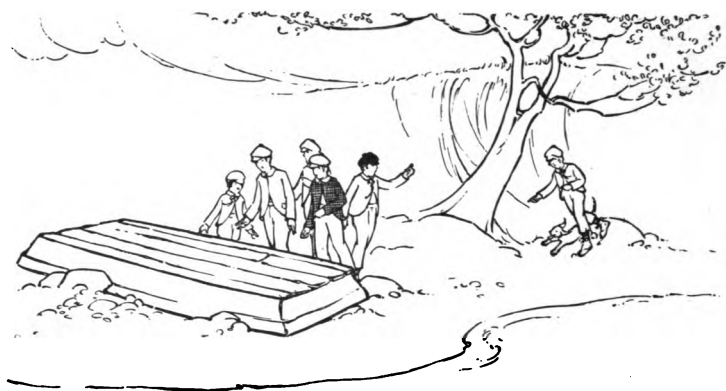
Jimmy seemed to pay no attention to Alfred, but he looked toward Beechnut and shouted, "I have let them out."

"I am glad of it," Beechnut called back.

"You see the difference between Hal and Jimmy," said Beechnut, speaking to Margaret and Frank. "They are both of them always in mischief; but when Jimmy finds that he has taken a wrong course he turns about at once

like a man, openly and honorably. But Hal either does not turn at all, or waits until he can get a chance to turn when people are not looking at him.”

While Beechnut was making this explanation they had resumed their walk and in due time they reached the village. The errand was soon done, and they went back home as they had come.



X

THE GIBRALTAR

Among the ingenious plans which Beechnut contrived for amusing himself and the village boys on Saturday afternoons, one was the fitting up of a large flat-bottomed boat which he called the *Gibraltar*. In this boat he used to make excursions with the boys on a pond not far from the village. The pond was a large and beautiful sheet of water studded with wild, wooded islands. There were a great many birds' nests on these islands, and the shores were generally bordered on all sides by a smooth beach strewn with a great variety of colored pebbles. The bottom of the pond

was of hard sand, and as the water was very clear the boys could generally see the bottom, wherever they might be, by looking over the gunwale of the boat. At one place a cove extended for a considerable distance into the land, and in this cove the pond lilies grew very luxuriantly.

There were two or three small boats on the pond. These the boys of the village were fond of borrowing in order that they might go out on the water to fish or to get pond lilies. The soil which formed the bottom of the cove was black and made the water look very deep, though it really was not; but the boys felt a particular dread of it because it appeared so gloomy and was so full of the tangled stems of the lilies. They imagined that many serpents, lizards, and turtles lived in the mud of the bottom.

There was a raft in the cove made of old logs, fence posts, boards, and rails. The larger and more daring boys used to go out on this raft, though it was a rather hazardous operation. The mystery and danger, however, which characterized the waters of the cove gave to

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the enterprise of exploring them a particular zest and charm.

One day when Beechnut and several of the other boys were walking along the shore of the pond near the outlet they found a large flat-bottomed boat lying bottom upward on the land a little back from the water. It was very much out of repair and was full of leaks. Some of the boys proposed that they should heave it over and launch it and so have a sail.

“Very well,” said Beechnut, “let us try.”

The boys, accordingly, took hold with great resolution. They stood in a row along one side of the boat, and putting their hands under the edge of the gunwale began to lift. They could move the boat a little, but could not raise it from the ground.

Then they sat down on the edge of the boat in the shadow of the trees to consider what they would do.

“Whose boat is it?” asked Beechnut.

The boys said it belonged to a man named Grey who lived in a small red house not very far distant, near a mill.

“I am going to get him to give it to me,”

said Beechnut, "and then I mean to repair it and put it afloat and enlist a crew to manage it."

"Who will you have in your crew?" inquired Arthur.

"I will first make sure that I can get the boat," replied Beechnut.

He rose and with the other boys in his rear went along the shore of the outlet to the pond until he came to a bridge. Parker was fishing on the bridge, but Beechnut's party were so much interested in going to see about getting the boat that they crossed without stopping to learn whether he had caught anything. On the other hand, Parker himself, seeing this company passing rapidly by with a manner that indicated they were intent on something of importance, hastily wound up his line and followed them.

He was not in very good standing with Beechnut, for he had disobeyed Beechnut's orders at the encampment and had afterwards refused to be tried by court-martial for his offense. So Beechnut would not admit him to be a member of any of their expeditions,

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though in other respects he and Parker were on as friendly terms with each other as usual.

The boys went on at a quick pace along a cart path which led through the fields toward the house where Mr. Grey lived.

Mr. Grey was at work in his yard with a yoke of oxen hauling great stones on a drag to a place where some men were building a wall. He looked up somewhat surprised to see such a company of boys coming into his yard. Beechnut was at the head of them. Mr. Grey having drawn the stones which were on his drag to the place where they were wanted, stopped the oxen and waited to hear what Beechnut had to say.

"I have come," said Beechnut, "to ask you to give me that old boat of yours which lies under the trees on the shore, if you have no use for it."

"That old boat?" repeated Mr. Grey, looking first at Beechnut and then at the other boys. "What do you want to do with it?"

"I want to repair it and fit it for sea," replied Beechnut.

"Well," said Mr. Grey, "I don't use the old

scow now, but I may possibly want it hereafter for some purpose or other."

"Will you lend it to me then?" Beechnut asked.

"I will sell it to you," said Mr. Grey.

"What do you ask for it?" inquired Beechnut.

"I'll sell it to you very cheap," said Mr. Grey. "You may have it for two dollars. You and the other boys can make up that sum very easily."

Beechnut paused to consider the subject. "No," said he presently, "I cannot buy it—at least not now; but if you will lend it to me I will repair it if I can, and give it up to you whenever you need it."

"All right," responded Mr. Grey, "I will lend you the scow till I call for it."

"I am much obliged to you, sir," said Beechnut. "I shall take good care of it."

So saying, he turned away, followed by the other boys. As soon as they reached the boat Beechnut took a general survey of it, and then said he was going to name it the *Gibraltar*. "And now for a crew," he continued. "Do any of you wish to enlist in the crew of

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the *Gibraltar*? The terms are, plenty of hard work and no pay."

"I will be one," said Arthur.

"So will I," said Gilbert; and another and another of the boys said the same.

Beechnut took from his pocket a piece of paper and a pencil, and wrote as follows:

We the subscribers enlist in the crew of the *Gibraltar* and promise to obey all the captain's orders until we withdraw.

"There," said Beechnut, as he finished writing, "you can leave the crew whenever you please, but so long as you remain in it you must obey."

The boys began to sign the paper one after another. Gilbert asked what they would have to do.

"Just what I order," replied Beechnut.

"And suppose we don't obey?" said Gilbert.

"Then," responded Beechnut, "I shall strike your names off the list. That's all."

"And can't we join the crew again?" Gilbert asked.

"No," answered Beechnut, "not until you

are first court-martialed for your disobedience and properly punished.”

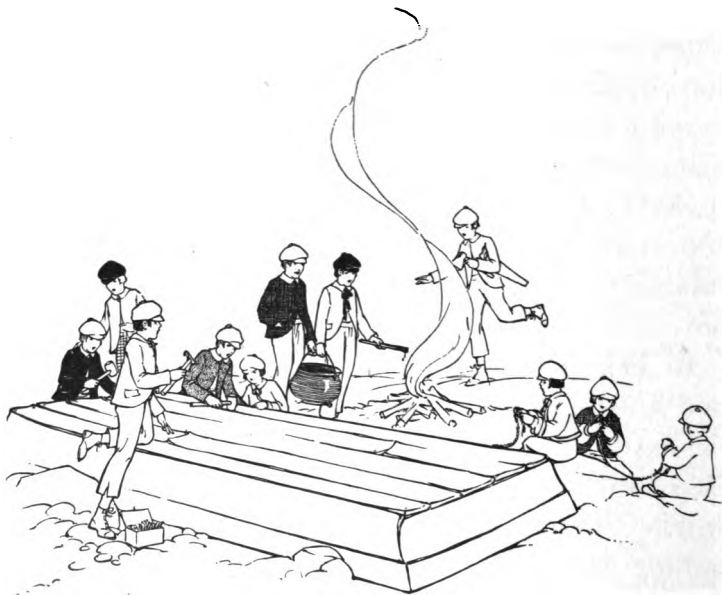
Beechnut sent two of the boys who had signed the paper to Mr. Henley's house to get a hammer and some nails, and several old ropes, which were in a storeroom in the barn. Two other boys were dispatched to the village to get a kettle of tar, while those that remained with Beechnut were employed in collecting sticks to build a fire, and in making wedges and selecting wood for mallets to be used in calking the seams in the boat. He sent a fifth boy to get a hatchet and saw.

In half an hour the boys had all returned, and then the spot where the boat was lying exhibited a very animated and busy scene. Beechnut was examining carefully the boards which formed the bottom of the boat, and nailing all those which he found loose and insecure. Some of the boys were picking the old ropes to pieces to make oakum, and others were driving the oakum thus made into the seams. Beechnut was very particular in allowing none but the older and more careful boys to have anything to do with the

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tar, for fear that they would get it on their clothes.

The boys worked in this manner very busily and harmoniously all the afternoon, and when



it was time for them to go home to supper the whole bottom of the boat had been put in a complete state of repair. Beechnut then dismissed his crew, asking them to meet at the same place the next Saturday afternoon, and

saying that then they would see if they could turn the boat over.

The progress of the work was not wholly arrested during the week, for Beechnut made an oar for a model and set two of the boys whose fathers were carpenters and had shops and tools, at work to make others like it. The oars were small and light and were of pine, which is a wood very easily worked.

Many new names were added to the list of Beechnut's crew during the week, and the boys assembled in great strength at the appointed time on the following Saturday. When all were on the ground they proceeded under Beechnut's directions to pry up one side of the boat by means of long levers brought for the purpose from a near-by fence. As fast as the boat was raised the boys propped it up with blocks of wood.

At last they got it up on edge. They then carried the blocks and levers around to the other side, and gradually let the boat down. They had previously laid rollers on the ground where the boat was coming, and when it rested on them the boys thought they could now

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push the boat into the water and have a sail; but Beechnut said there was to be no launching for the present, and in fact they waited a fortnight.

Meanwhile astonishing improvements were made on board. The boat was square and very wide so that the bottom formed quite a spacious floor. Beechnut erected a canopy at the stern. It consisted of an awning supported by four posts. He then made two rows of seats for the oarsmen extending from the center of the boat forward, six on each side. There was a considerable space in the middle of the boat, between the seats, left unencumbered.

As soon as all was ready the boat was swept out, and then washed very clean, and a day was appointed for the launching. When that day came the boys pried the boat along on the rollers into the water, and when it was afloat they gave three cheers. Then, at Beechnut's direction, they all embarked and started on a voyage.



XI

A COURT-MARTIAL

Beechnut established a harbor for his ship under the bridge not far from Mr. Grey's house. The water there was deep and still, and just below the bridge the brook took a turn to the left between banks which were overhung with willows and other trees. The spot was thus cool, shady, and secluded.

Beechnut said he was going to appoint four lieutenants for his ship, to take the command

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when he was absent. They were to be called the first, second, third, and fourth lieutenants, and the highest on the list who was present was always to take command when Beechnut himself was away. The boat was never to go out unless one of the lieutenants could go and take command. Beechnut appointed three lieutenants, but said that he would postpone for a little time the appointment of the fourth.

Nearly all the boys of the village enlisted in the crew. Parker was the principal exception. Even he wished to enlist, but Beechnut would not allow him to do so, because he refused to submit to a court-martial for his disobedience at the camp in the woods. Beechnut, however, let him sail with the other boys in the *Gibraltar* when there was room, but always treated him as a passenger.

Parker pretended for a time to like this just as well. Really he would often have preferred to row, or to assist in hoisting or lowering the sail, or to be sent on commissions to the village as were the other boys; but while all the rest were busy in these and similar

occupations he was compelled to stand idly by, or to sit listlessly in the stern of the boat. The boys called him the gentleman, and he soon began to find his position very awkward.

It would have been a great deal better for him to have yielded at the first. Instead of that he waited until just before the boys were going to set out one afternoon for a grand excursion to the Elephant. The Elephant was a small island at a remote part of the pond. It had four large trees on it, the tops of which joined and formed a mass of foliage that Beechnut imagined looked like an elephant. So he gave the island that name. It was a very pleasant island to land on and encamp.

Parker now wanted very much to join the party as one of the regular members, and he undertook to surrender on conditions. "I will agree to be tried by a court-martial," said he to Beechnut, "and then I will join your crew, if you will appoint me a lieutenant. There is one vacancy."

"Yes, there is one vacancy," said Beechnut, "and I was reserving that lieutenancy thinking it probable you might come in by and by

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and be the best man for it. But now I cannot appoint you. Commanders never appoint their officers by argument. Besides, I have as many men as I want. In fact I would rather not have you join, were it not that you are an efficient and capable fellow and can help so much and so well when you choose to. As it is, I care nothing about it one way or the other."

Parker was greatly perplexed at this speech. The compliments to his capacity softened the harshness of the reproaches which it contained and made him feel that Beechnut was not actuated by any ill-will, since he was so ready to perceive and acknowledge his good qualities. Had it not been for the commendations, Parker would have been greatly offended and gone off in a rage. But now, after a few minutes' pause, he said that he would surrender.

"Very well," responded Beechnut; and he looked round among the boys, who during this conversation had been at work, some on the bank, and some on board the ship, making preparations to embark.

"Gilbert and Arthur, take that man," said Beechnut, pointing at Parker, "and put him in

irons. Then lead him forward and keep him in close custody, and feed him on bread and water."

Beechnut said this in a very stern and commanding tone. Parker smiled. The mortification and disgrace of subjection to Beechnut's will were very much mitigated by the pleasure of playing prisoner. Some of the smaller boys who did not know how much of serious earnest there might be in this terrible command looked a little frightened. Beechnut drew from his pocket a small chain and gave it to Gilbert, saying, "Here are the fetters."

Gilbert and Arthur then went to where Parker stood, and one at each arm they led him along to the bow of the boat where they seated their prisoner on a low seat. Then directing him to put his feet together, they passed the chain around his ankles and hooked the end of it into one of the links.

By the time the prisoner was thus secured, the various articles which the boys had been putting on board were all properly stowed in their places, and then Beechnut gave orders to man the oars. He stationed one of his men at the helm while he took his own station near

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the center of the boat to give his orders. The boat was soon put in motion, and it glided very smoothly under the bridge. Then the mast was raised, but the sail was not spread, for the wind was contrary. The boys were therefore compelled to propel the boat by means of the oars. This was however very easy, as the oars were light and there were a great many of them.

It was a warm and pleasant summer afternoon and the boys all wore thin suits, and had taken off their jackets and placed them under the seats. Presently Beechnut gave the order to take in the oars and lay them in their places close along the gunwale of the boat. The boys did so.

“Oarsmen,” said Beechnut, “shoes off.”

The boys took off their shoes and put them down on the floor of the boat. As for stockings, they did not wear any.

“Oarsmen, stand up on the seats,” commanded Beechnut.

The twelve oarsmen rose and stepped up on their seats.

“Overboard!” said Beechnut.

The boys were accustomed to obey Beechnut's orders in the most unhesitating manner, and they immediately leaped over into the water. It was not much more than knee deep there, and was quite warm.

"Now," said Beechnut, "take hold of the boat along the sides and walk it through the water."

The boys enjoyed this operation very much, and they went on until the water began to deepen, when Beechnut ordered the waders to get on board and resume their oars. He then gave directions to the helmsman so that the boat was steered around a rocky promontory covered with forest trees into a shady cove.

The oars were taken in, and Beechnut said he was now going to attend to the court-martial. He informed his crew that the court was to consist of the three lieutenants. He called those officers together and directed them to take seats under the canopy. Next he ordered Gilbert and Arthur to bring the prisoner. Gilbert took the chain off Parker's feet so as to enable him to walk, and fastened it instead around his arms, which Parker held

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folded before him for this purpose. They then led the prisoner in front of the canopy and gave him a seat on a stool.

"You are accused," said Beechnut, "of disobedience of orders and desertion on the day of our encampment in the woods. Are you guilty or not guilty?"

"Not guilty," responded Parker.

"I will call the witnesses," said Beechnut, "and the court will listen to the evidence."

The oarsmen and the rest of the crew had gathered near and stood crowding around in a circle to listen to the proceedings. Beechnut looked about to select his witnesses, and calling two or three boys forward directed them to state the facts.

These boys said that when they went to the woods in the early spring to form an encampment, Parker not only would not help build the fire, but took the buffalo robes they had brought and sat on them and refused to give them up when Beechnut ordered him to do so; that he would not assist in the work at the camp, nor afterwards on the march, thus deserting the service altogether.

Beechnut asked Parker if he had anything to offer in his defense.

Parker replied that he did not disobey in respect to building the fire, for Beechnut did not order him to help in that work; and that he only intended to keep the buffalo robes to himself till he had warmed his feet. He claimed that he did not desert at all, for he remained with the boys at the encampment, and was with them all the way returning, until he broke through the ice. Then he was obliged to run home as fast as he could to avoid taking cold. He was sure that was not desertion.

When Parker finished all that he had to say in his defense, Beechnut directed the three lieutenants to confer together and decide on the verdict. They did so, and in a few minutes the first lieutenant said they had agreed that the prisoner was guilty of disobeying orders, but was not guilty of desertion. Beechnut then ordered the prisoner to be taken back to the bow of the boat, saying that he would call him soon to receive his sentence.

Beechnut had the oarsmen take their places

and begin to row and told the helmsman to head the boat toward a wild and rocky island not far from the Elephant, out toward the middle of the pond. After proceeding for some minutes in this direction, the boys, at Beechnut's command, stopped rowing, and Beechnut called on the keepers to bring their prisoner aft to hear his sentence.

Gilbert and Arthur accordingly led Parker to where Beechnut was standing, and then Beechnut with a very grave face and in a very solemn tone of voice told him that he had been tried by court-martial and convicted of disobedience to orders, and that his sentence was to be put ashore on an uninhabited island and abandoned there.

"You see the island," Beechnut continued, pointing in the direction the boat had been moving. "You will find no inhabitants on it but savages, and perhaps not even them. Your only chance to get away from it will be to put a white flag on a pole, and then perhaps some ship coming along may receive you.

"We shall not carry you actually to the land,

but as soon as we get near it we shall throw you overboard to make your way to the place as best you can. But the keepers can take off your irons so that you can have the use of your legs."

Although Beechnut said all this in a very serious manner, yet Parker and the rest knew that his plan was to make amusement for the whole company. The prisoner, who was an excellent swimmer, would like no better sport than to be thrown overboard from a boat within any reasonable distance of the land; and as to being abandoned, he knew that Beechnut would not leave him on the island long. He, therefore, was very well satisfied with his sentence, though he pretended all the time to be in a state of extreme distress. The other boys enjoyed keenly the prospect of such a punishment and began to evince the greatest excitement and hilarity.

When Beechnut thought the boat was sufficiently near the shore he ordered the boys to stop rowing, and then directed Parker to take off his hat, his jacket, and his shoes. The clothes that remained were light and thin and would do

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very little to impede the motion of his limbs in swimming.

As soon as Parker was ready, Beechnut commanded him to lie down on his back near the bow of the boat, and then designated six of the biggest and strongest boys in his crew to take their places, three on each side of him.

“Now, my men,” said Beechnut, “when I give my orders, thus: ‘Swing once—swing twice—swing thrice—and over’; at the word ‘over,’ you must pitch him head foremost into the sea.”

The six boys stood in readiness while the rest of the crew gathered around, eager to see. “Clinch him,” said Beechnut.

The six boys stooped down and grasped the prisoner by his limbs and by his clothes, wherever they could best get hold, and raised him into the air.

“Swing once,” said Beechnut—“swing twice—swing thrice—and over!”

And over went Parker with a tremendous plunge, and the water closed over his head. He was so good a swimmer and had such con-

trol of himself in the water that he might have avoided going much below the surface, had he been so disposed. He was, however, rather proud of his powers as a diver, and he seemed to consider this a good opportunity to make an exhibition of them. Accordingly, instead of attempting to come up, he went down to the bottom. The boys watched for him from the boat. Presently they saw him coming up from far down in the dark water. He soon appeared at the surface and lifting an arm out of the water tossed a handful of pebbles over into the boat. Then he swam off toward the shore.

“Now, my men,” said Beechnut, “three cheers for the ejected mutineer.”

The boys gave the three cheers with great enthusiasm. Afterward Beechnut had them go to their places and the oarsmen resumed their rowing. They saw Parker reach the shore and climb up on the rocks, where he sat down in the sun, and breaking off a branch from a little bush growing near him, he waved it in the air.

Beechnut proceeded to the Elephant and

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landed the stores and implements the boys had brought, and left two boys to make preparations for supper. Then, with the boat, he went



to the island on which Parker had been left and took him on board. They were soon back at the Elephant where Parker signed his name on the list of the crew and thus was again one of Beechnut's men. He joined the

others in helping to get supper, and then the boys sat down on the grass to eat the provisions they had brought with them and enjoy the cool breeze which came in under the trees from off the surface of the water.

At length Beechnut gave orders to embark. The boys expected that they would now hoist the sail and go directly back toward home without the fatigue of rowing. But Beechnut ordered the men to take their places at the oars. Not far from where they were was an island which contained a ledge of slaty rock. The ledge had been much broken by frost and natural decay, and a large number of flat stones could be obtained from it very easily, and quite close to the shore. Beechnut explained all this to the boys and said he was going to this ledge to get a load of stones and carry them to Mr. Grey to help him build his wall.

The boys all approved the plan and pulled at their oars with a hearty good will. Beechnut brought the boat up to the shore of the island at a place where a big flat rock at the edge of the water formed a sort of wharf. Then leaving one boy to guard the boat and

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keep it from floating away he and the rest went through a patch of bushes to the foot of the ledge and each took up as large a stone as he could conveniently carry. Thus loaded, they returned to the boat where they deposited their burdens. They then went back to the quarry for another load. This they did four times. The stones were piled in a compact heap along the middle of the boat, and they formed a considerable cargo.

Now the boys went to their seats, the boat was pushed off, the sail hoisted, and the *Gibraltar* with its heavy freight and numerous company began to move through the water toward home. The boys were glad of this opportunity to rest from their labors, and as they were wafted along by the wind they sat talking together or walked about the boat. Some of the smaller lads amused themselves by climbing up on the heap of stones.

The helmsman steered the boat directly toward the outlet of the pond, and on reaching it they followed the stream until they came opposite Mr. Grey's house. Here they stopped to deliver the stones.

Mr. Grey had seen the sail gliding along among the trees as the boat was coming. He had no idea that the craft was freighted with a cargo for him, and he came down to the bank of the stream to see it as it passed. When it drew near, his eyes were attracted to the heap of flat stones in the boat. He uttered some exclamation of surprise, and said, "Boys, where do you get such stones as those?"

"On the island in the pond," replied Beechnut.

"Well," said Mr. Grey, "I wish you could find some stones like those on the mainland where I could get at them. They are exactly what I want for my wall to fill in the spaces under the large stones, when they do not fit exactly to those below them, and thus wedge them up to their proper level."

"We brought this load for you," said Beechnut, "and we will throw the stones ashore right here."

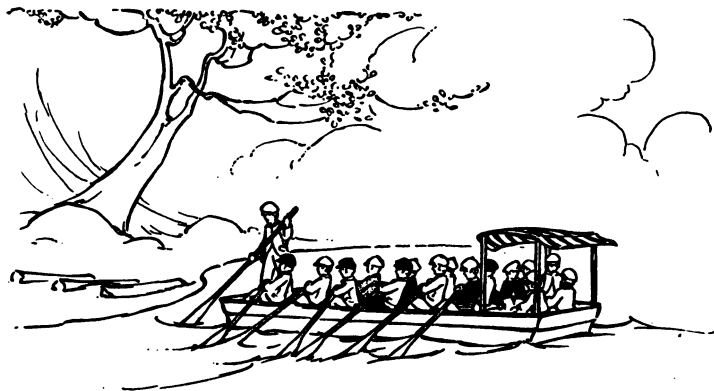
"I am sure I am much obliged to you," said Mr. Grey. "I was getting short of that kind of stone. I will give you half a dollar a load for as many such loads as you choose to bring me."

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“We might pay for the boat with four loads,” said Parker to Beechnut.

“Yes,” responded Beechnut, “and that is what we will do. Boys,” said he, addressing the crew, “let us unload the stones.”

Mr. Grey helped them so that the cargo was soon landed. After that the boys rowed the boat to its place under the bridge, where they moored it safely, and then they went home.





XII

AN EXCURSION TO THE MOUNTAINS

Somewhat later in the season, a plan was formed by a small village party to go up among the mountains to gather blueberries. The party were to meet at the bridge where the *Gibraltar* had its harbor. Caroline, a bright and lively village girl thirteen years of age, was the projector of the plan. The company consisted of about half a dozen of the older girls and boys of the village together with Wallace, Beechnut, Frank, and Margaret.

It was not at first the intention to include Margaret; but the evening before the day appointed, when she saw the others making their

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preparations, she became very eager to be allowed to go. Wallace told her that Beechnut was to have the main care and trouble of getting the party up and down the mountain, and that she must go and ask him.

She accordingly ran out to find Beechnut. He was in a backroom arranging some baskets and some covered tin pails, and packing them with provisions for the party to carry the next day.

"Beechnut," said Margaret, "may I go with you to the mountains to-morrow?"

"You!" responded Beechnut, speaking in a tone of surprise.

"Yes," said Margaret, "I want to go very much."

"Well, now," said Beechnut, rising and turning to Margaret, "we can't have any little girls in our party. We can't possibly have any girls in our party unless they are as tall as *that*."

While he was speaking he took from his pocket a piece of chalk and made a mark on an upright beam in the side of the room. But he was careful to have the mark somewhat

below where he perceived Margaret's head would come. "There," said he, going back to his work, "we could not possibly let any girls go with us up among the mountains unless they were as tall as that."

Margaret walked eagerly to the place and stood with her back against the post, and then turned her head as well as she could to see where the chalk mark was. "I'm above it!" she exclaimed, clapping her hands. "Look, Beechnut, look! I'm above it."

Beechnut came to Margaret with an expression of great astonishment on his countenance. "Why, how you have grown!" he said. "What a big girl you are!"

"I can go," said Margaret, dancing away from the post and clapping her hands. "I'm higher than the mark and I can go;" and off she ran to tell Frank.

The party from Mr. Henley's started soon after breakfast. They were to meet the village division of the company at the bridge at eight o'clock. The morning was pleasant, and it was not very warm. They all carried baskets or pails containing provisions, and were to

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have their dinner on the mountain and use the baskets and pails to bring back the berries on their return.

When they got to the bridge they found several already there, and the rest arrived a few minutes later. They were soon ready to go on, but just as they were about to start, Caroline looked over the railing and saw Beechnut's boat. It projected a little from under the bridge.

"Oh, here is the *Gibraltar!*" she cried. "Let us go in the *Gibraltar* a part of the way. It will be delightful to sail along in the boat. Besides, it will save our walking, and we shall not get so tired."

"Who would row?" asked another of the girls.

The girl who spoke was Mary Bell. She was about Caroline's age, but of a quieter and gentler disposition.

"Why, there are one, two, three, four boys here," said Caroline, "not counting Frank."

"I can row," said Frank.

"Yes," Caroline continued, "and we girls can help, if necessary. I don't think the boat

is very heavy. Beechnut and Wallace could row it alone, I dare say. Couldn't you, Wallace?"

"I suppose we could—slowly," replied Wallace.

"And we don't wish to go very fast," Caroline commented. "So come on;" and she went through an open place in the fence at the end of the bridge and ran down a path which led to the harbor.

The younger boys and a number of the girls followed her. A few of the less impetuous of the party, including Wallace and Beechnut, remained on the bridge.

"Come," said Caroline, looking up to them from below.

"I am afraid to go in the boat," said one of the smaller girls who stood with Margaret and Mary Bell on the bridge.

"So am I," said Margaret.

"Oh, there is no danger," Caroline declared. "Besides, if any of you are afraid you can walk along the path on the shore."

"Yes," said Mary, "and I will go too, and take care of them."

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So saying, she lifted her loaded basket and gave the children theirs and began to walk along.

“Why would not that be a good plan?” said Wallace, speaking to Beechnut. “We will divide the company and let a part go in the boat and the rest walk along the shore. If you will go and take care of the boat, I will take care of the party on the land.”

“But we want you to help row,” said Caroline.

Wallace looked a little perplexed. He wished to gratify Caroline, and yet he did not like to leave Mary Bell to walk with the young children alone. “At any rate,” said he, “there is no need of Mary’s carrying that heavy basket. In fact all the baskets can go in the boat.”

So he called to Mary and she paused and looked back to learn what he wanted. He hurried along the path till he came to where she was standing. He explained that he wished to get the baskets she and her companions were carrying, as they could just as well be taken with the others in the boat. He col-

lected them, and then said, "You must not go fast and run away from us. There are so few rowers that our progress will be very slow. You had better stop now and then on the bank to let us keep up with you."

"All right," agreed Mary, "I will."

"Come," called Caroline to Wallace.

He looked back and saw her waiting under the bridge. Beechnut had unfastened the chain by which the boat had been secured, and the other boys were putting in the baskets and pails, and most of the girls had already embarked.

Wallace returned, carrying the baskets of those who were to walk, and after helping Caroline on board, got on himself, and the boat was pushed off. There were only four to row and they could not make much speed. Caroline sat at her ease under the canopy and said that it was delightful, sailing over such a beautiful stream. After a time she put in an oar herself and tried to row, saying that she wished they could go faster. She did not, however, succeed very well. When she dipped her oar into the water it seemed to entangle itself there and troubled her to get it out.

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Wallace offered to teach her to row, and began to give her directions how to hold and manage her oar; but she said she did not wish to row any more that day; she was tired. So she took the oar in and went back to the seat under the canopy. Beechnut and Wallace were glad of this; for the catching and dragging of her oar in the water only impeded the motion of the boat and made their hard work still harder.

Meanwhile, Wallace watched, as well as he could, the progress of the party on the shore. He could not do this very conveniently because Mary Bell, though she stopped occasionally on some green bank or at a projecting point of land to wait for the *Gibraltar* to come up, usually kept a little in advance. The oarsmen, who were sitting, of course, with their backs toward the bow of the boat, could therefore not see her and her companions without turning round or looking over their shoulders.

Presently the boat reached the spot where the stream widened out into the pond, and here the path to the mountains led away from the water through thickets and woods. As they

approached this spot they saw Mary Bell and the children in her charge engaged in making a garden with the flowers they had gathered, by setting them in the sand. The sand was dry on the surface, but it was very moist below, and this moisture would tend to keep the flowers from fading.



The boat party were glad to get to land, and the boys who had been rowing sat down on the bank to rest while the girls gathered around the garden. But after a short time Wallace called on every one to get ready to resume the journey.

“Let us go to the boat and get some of the pails and baskets to carry,” said Mary to Caroline.

“So we will,” responded Caroline; and the

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two girls went to the boat, where the boys were busy putting things in order.

Mary took up some of the smaller baskets and pails and distributed them to the several girls, who then started to walk along the path which led into the woods. She took one of the larger baskets herself and followed them. Caroline was not satisfied with such a one as Mary had taken. It was not heavy enough. So she went to Wallace who had the heaviest basket of all in his hand and asked him to let her carry that.

“By no means,” said Wallace.

“Yes,” urged Caroline, “you have been rowing all this time to please me, and you must be tired. So I insist on carrying the heavy basket. You must find a lighter one.”

Wallace at length yielded, and Caroline took the basket, while he found another considerably smaller. Caroline, however, did not carry her heavy burden far. She soon set it down in order that she might rest, and Wallace then said he would carry it. After a feeble resistance Caroline assented, and Wallace went on carrying both baskets.

She might have relieved Wallace of the

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smaller one; but she did not seem to think of that. Yet, though she failed to help the party in carrying their burdens, she cheered and enlivened them during their progress by her sprightly conversation and joyous laugh.

The party went on, slowly but steadily ascending all the time, until at length they reached the spot Beechnut had selected for their stopping place. "I wish we had your tent here, Beechnut," said Margaret.

She referred to a small tent which he had made, and which he sometimes carried on such expeditions as this. "*It is* here," said Beechnut.

He went toward a cleft in some rocks that were near by and drew forth the tent. He had brought it up the previous evening so that it might be ready. The whole party shouted with joy at the sight of it. They went to work at once and set the tent up, and as soon as that was done they stored their provisions carefully inside. Then, after getting a good drink of water, all round, from a spring that gushed forth at the base of the rocks, the children took the empty baskets and pails, and went in search of blueberries.



XIII

MISHAPS

The place where the party had arrived was very wild and picturesque. It was on a plateau with perpendicular cliffs rising on one side, and a vast chasm on the other. They had come up from below by a long winding path. This was somewhat difficult to ascend, and there was enough of the semblance of danger in its steepness to make the children feel a strong interest in the work of climbing, and to fill their hearts with satisfaction and triumph when they reached the elevation to which it conducted them.

Some portions of the plateau were shaded by tall firs and pines. Here and there the trunks of ancient trees which had been overturned in former years by the winds, lay on the ground concealed by rank growths of ferns, laurels, and raspberry bushes. One such, very large, and hollow at the big end, lay near where Beechnut had pitched his tent. The open end was turned toward the tent, and formed a mouth like that of an oven. From this open end the log extended a long distance among the bushes until at last it was lost in a mass of stumps and dead tangled branches.

When the party left the tent to begin the gathering of blueberries, they supposed the spot chosen for their encampment was so secluded, that the arrangements they had made there would remain wholly unseen and unknown until they returned. They had not, however, been gone more than half an hour before the tent was discovered by a strange observer who was very much charmed at the sight. This observer was a large and beautiful mother squirrel. She was a gray squirrel, and Beechnut had seen her when he came up

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with the tent, standing on a ledge of rock watching anxiously to see whether he would go near the place where her nest was. In the nest were her two little ones, and she was very anxious lest harm should come to them. After Beechnut had put his tent in the cleft he still saw the squirrel standing motionless on the rock and watching him.

On the following day, as the squirrel was returning to her nest with some food for the little ones, she discovered the tent which the party had just set up and left. She was astonished and greatly alarmed. Her nest was in the hollow tree trunk which has already been described, about midway of the length.

The squirrel was on the branch of a fir tree, and she ran out to the end and stopped to examine the tent more closely. What could it be? Was it some sort of a trap set to catch her? Or, was it possible that it was an enormous mushroom that had suddenly sprung up out of the ground?

She looked at it very attentively for a few minutes without being able to come to any satisfactory conclusion, and then began to

think of her little ones. She was afraid they were not safe. So she ran along the bough of the fir tree to the main stem, and down that to the ground. Thence she leaped four feet through the air to her log, ran along on it till she came to a small hole in a crotch near the place where her nest was situated within, and, lowering her tail, she crept in. To her great joy she found her young squirrels perfectly safe. In fact, they were asleep, wholly unconscious that any tent had been erected near their dwelling.

The squirrel, though much relieved at finding all safe at her nest, was by no means easy. She came out of her hole repeatedly to look at the tent. Finally she crept softly along toward it, and finding no motion or sound was to be observed, she advanced close to it. Finally, she went in at the door and crept cautiously around. There were various baskets, boxes, and parcels lying on the ground, and she examined these attentively, smelling them and attempting to pull them open with her paws. She succeeded in getting partly into one parcel which was wrapped in a newspaper, and came

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to the edge of a cracker. She began to nibble. It tasted like corn, she thought, only much nicer and more delicate.

She was just considering the possibility of



carrying home a portion to her young ones when she heard voices and the tramping of feet approaching. Immediately she ran out of the tent, scrambled through the

grass to her log, and mounted on the end of it. A boy and two or three girls were coming along the pathway. It was Frank accompanied by some of the younger girls who had got tired of gathering blueberries, and had concluded to come back to the tent and rest there and get ready for dinner.

The squirrel hurried away and got into the fir tree, and hiding in the crotch of a limb where she could see without being seen, she

watched the children to find out what they would do.

"Carry your baskets carefully," said Frank, "and look where you step, or you will tumble down and spill all your berries."

The girls obeyed this caution and came forward slowly until they all reached the tent. "There," said Frank, "we will set our berries inside, and then we'll get ready for dinner."

"What can we do about the dinner?" asked one of the girls named Augusta.

"We can choose a place for it," replied Frank, "and carry out the things."

"Yes, and we can build a fire," said Augusta. "We shall want a fire."

She looked around to find a good spot for it, and noticed the log which presented its open end toward where she was standing. "There is a grand place," said she, "in the end of that log. The hollow will do for our fireplace."

"But we have no matches," said Frank.

"Oh, there are plenty of them in the tent, somewhere," Augusta responded. "Beechnut always brings matches. I will hunt for them in the parcels while you are getting some wood."

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Frank agreed to this proposal, and calling to Margaret to come and help him, he began to gather sticks and knots and dry leaves and crowd them into what Augusta called the fireplace. In the meantime Augusta was busily employed in the tent, opening baskets and unrolling parcels in search of Beechnut's match box. After creating great disorder in her search and throwing the things all about the ground inside the tent, she at last found the matches and ran to carry them to Frank.

While opening the parcels she intended to tie them up just as they had been before; but, when she discovered the matches after such a long search, she was so excited and overjoyed that she lost all thought of the disorder which she had made. The squirrel still remained in the crotch of the tree, wondering what these strange intruders into her dominions could be intending to do.

Frank rubbed a match and lighted the mass of combustibles which he had crowded into the hollow log, and he soon had a blazing and crackling fire. Augusta ran around in all directions getting more fuel. Now and then

she broke off small branches from the hemlock trees growing in the vicinity and held them in the flames to hear the snapping they occasioned.

The principal portion of the smoke ascended in dense volumes toward the sky. Some of it, however, was forced along inside of the log until it reached the dark and narrow niche where the squirrel had made her nest.

The young squirrels were almost smothered, and the mother was in a state of extreme terror and distress. The smoke, the flames, the shouts and exclamations of the children, filled her with dismay, and she was unable to decide whether to remain where she was to watch the course of events, or to hasten back to her hole and endeavor to rescue her little ones from the threatened destruction.

While things were in this state the attention of the children, and the squirrel as well, was arrested by the sudden appearance of Beechnut. He came running, out of breath with exertion, and demanded to know who had built that fire.

Frank was just on the point of boasting of it as his work; but it was plain from Beech-

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nut's air and manner that he considered it an offense to be condemned, and not an exploit to be honored and applauded. So, instead of saying proudly, "I did it," Frank hesitated

a moment and then asked, "Why? What is the matter?"

"You must not have a fire here," said Beechnut.

"Come and help me put it out."



He began at once to pull away the burning brands and scatter them about on the rocks and grass, wherever he saw that there was nothing which would be in danger of kindling.

"*Why* must we not have a fire here?" insisted Frank.

"We will talk about that by and by," replied Beechnut. "The thing to be done now is to put it out. Go and get the ax from the tent. I brought it up yesterday."

By the time Frank arrived with the ax, Beechnut had pulled the fire entirely to pieces, though the great hollow log was still burning, and the flames were working their way farther and farther into it. Beechnut took the ax, and going along until he had got beyond the part which was on fire he began to cut into the log with heavy and rapid blows. He was going to stop the progress of the fire by cutting off the log.

As it happened this was the only measure which could save the young squirrels in the nest from certain death; though Beechnut knew nothing of their presence, and was acting with an entirely different purpose. To the mother squirrel the situation seemed worse instead of better. The hubbub which Beechnut made in putting out the fire, and the apparent extension of the fire itself by the scattering of the brands, and now those terrible blows of the ax on her dwelling filled her with double consternation. She scrambled down the fir tree, ran along the log, and rushed into her hole, which she found filled with suffocating vapor. She curled down over the little squirrels

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and remained for a time stupefied with fright, listening in dismay to the sound of the blows Beechnut was dealing all the while on the log at no great distance from her nest.

Presently the burning end of the log was cut off and split to pieces, and the fire reduced to a few smoldering brands. Beechnut then started to carry his ax back to the tent.

"Now tell me," said Frank, "why I must not build a fire here."

"It was wrong for you to build a fire here," responded Beechnut, "because you had no permission to build a fire anywhere. You will have to be punished, I think."

Augusta looked a little alarmed, but she had the generosity to say that the building of the fire was her fault more than Frank's, and that if anybody was to be punished she was the one.

"No;" said Beechnut, "if a girl and a boy together do mischief, the boy must bear all the punishment."

"Well," said Frank, "what is the punishment to be?"

They were now inside of the tent, and as

Beechnut put away the ax, he replied, "You must go out there somewhere on the green grass, and stand on your head and count twenty, ten for you and ten for Augusta."

Frank laughed. "Suppose I cannot stand on my head so long," said he.

"You must try ten times," was Beechnut's response, "and if you don't succeed in ten times the ten attempts shall go for your punishment."

"Very well," said Frank. "Come, Augusta."

Augusta followed him, skipping along very merrily. Margaret remained behind and said, looking up anxiously to Beechnut, "Oh, dear me! I am afraid he will break his neck."

"You need not worry about that," said Beechnut. "Who ever heard of a boy breaking his neck by standing on his head?"

Soon after this the remainder of the party returned to the tent with pails and baskets very heavily laden. After covering the berries over with green leaves they set the pails and baskets under the shade of some overhanging rocks. Beechnut was busy in the tent getting into order the things that Augusta had strewn

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around, and when he had finished, the provisions were all taken to a flat rock which Wallace had selected as a good place for the dinner party.

At a little distance was a hollow in the side of a cliff where Beechnut said Frank and Augusta might build a fire if they wished.

“Here, it will be all right,” said he, “but a fire in that great log might easily have escaped into the woods, and then have spread and done an immense amount of damage.”

After the dinner the whole party remained for some time sitting on the flat rock enjoying the cool mountain breeze and talking together. At length they arose and began to saunter slowly around, going out to various points where they could get extended views of the country below. Beechnut went to the spring, and worked there arranging some stones about it in such a manner as to make it more convenient to get the water.

A part of the company, among whom were Parker, Wallace, Mary Bell, and Caroline, rambled to the brink of the precipice which was near by. Caroline persisted in going quite close

to the edge—not so close as to be in any danger of falling, yet close enough to make most of the party uneasy and uncomfortable. Both Mary Bell and Wallace begged her not to do so, but this seemed only to cause her to be more disposed to display her courage.

Parker, however, said there was no reason for being timid, and that he believed he could climb down. Mary Bell was afraid he might make the attempt and she turned and walked away.

The others followed, and they were all going along together when Caroline took off her bonnet and began to swing it about in her hand, holding it by the strings. “Be careful,” said Wallace. “If the strings should break, or slip through your fingers, your bonnet would be carried over the precipice by the wind.”

“Oh, that would be no matter,” responded Caroline. “I dare say Parker would climb down and get it for me, if you were afraid to go.”

So she continued to swing her bonnet as before. The idea of having a young gentleman engaged in such a difficult and perhaps

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dangerous expedition in her service was a very agreeable one to her mind, and without intending to do so she let her fingers relax a little as she was thinking of the matter. Before she was aware of it the bonnet had gone from her hand and was rolling over and over on the ground.

“Stop it!” shouted Parker.

Wallace darted forward, but it had reached the brink of the precipice and went sailing down through the air until it lodged on a projecting shelf of rock a hundred feet below.

Caroline looked very much alarmed. “What

shall I do?" said she. "You can't get it for me, can you, Parker?"

"Yes," said Parker, "I can get it."

He began to search for a place where it would be possible to descend. But he soon returned to his companions with the report that the precipice was too steep.

Mary Bell and Wallace stood a little aside from the others. "Isn't there any way to get down?" asked Mary.

"I am not certain," Wallace replied. "Perhaps I could get down along under the ledges by starting in the crevice you see a short distance back of where we stand."

"I would not try," said Mary. "It is no matter about the bonnet. She may have mine to wear home, and I will put a handkerchief on my head."

"I will go and see whether I can get down or not," said Wallace. "You need not be anxious about me. I shall not run any risks. I have no intention of hazarding my life to save a bonnet."

He walked to where he thought the descent might be practicable and began to go down. In

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the meantime the news of the accident had spread, and the rest of the children of the party had come running to join those who were watching Wallace. They stood on a projecting ledge where they could easily see him as he descended. He proceeded cautiously, sometimes walking, sometimes going down backward on his hands and knees.

At length, to the great relief and joy of those who were observing him, he reached the comparatively level spot where the bonnet was lying. He took the bonnet up and waved it in the air in token of the successful accomplishment of his expedition, and then sat down on the rock to rest.

A few minutes later he rose and picked a little flower that was growing on the verge of the precipice. He put it in the bonnet and climbed back up the cliff the way he had come. When he reached the top he delivered the bonnet to Caroline, but the flower he gave to Mary Bell.

After this the party all came down the mountain and went to their several homes.



XIV

OLD POLYPOD

Frank was impulsive and eager to lead. Margaret was quiet and submissive and generally very willing to follow. Thus they agreed very well together and seldom got involved in dispute; and yet Frank was often very capricious and went from one thing to another in his plays drawing Margaret with him, each undertaking being soon abandoned in its turn.

For instance, one summer morning after breakfast, when he and Margaret came out to play, he proposed that they should go and work in the garden. He had a corner there which Beechnut had assigned him, and, in

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this corner he had sown flower seeds about a month previous. The plot was now covered with a very luxuriant vegetation, weeds and flowers having come up together in great profusion.

Frank had neglected his garden corner entirely since putting the seeds into the ground, but now the idea struck him that it would be good amusement to put it in order. Margaret assented to the proposal. So he went into the barn to get his little wheelbarrow and the tools.

He loaded up his wheelbarrow with a great variety of implements that he might be sure to have all he should need, and proceeded toward the garden. Margaret followed, gathering up such tools as fell off from the wheelbarrow, and dragging them on as well as she could.

Frank worked in the garden a short time—long enough to make considerable litter in the walk opposite his plot, with the weeds he pulled out from among the flowers and threw down there. Then he became tired. He told Margaret it was a fine day to go fishing, and

that he thought they had better go down to the pier and see what they could catch. He would leave the tools and the wheelbarrow where they were, he said; for he was coming back to work in his garden after he had rested himself a while, fishing.

To find his fishline caused him quite a little trouble. He looked in the proper place for it, but it was not there. He was sure he had put it there after he last used it. Somebody must have taken it away, he said, and he went to ask Beechnut if he had seen it anywhere.

"Yes," replied Beechnut, "it is around the corner of the house by the well. You left it there day before yesterday when you came home from fishing and went to the well to get a drink of water."

"Oh, so I did," said Frank. "Now I remember."

The hook was off from Frank's line. He had more hooks somewhere in a box, but he did not know exactly where. He looked in all the probable places that he could think of and inquired of every one he met; but the hooks could not be found.

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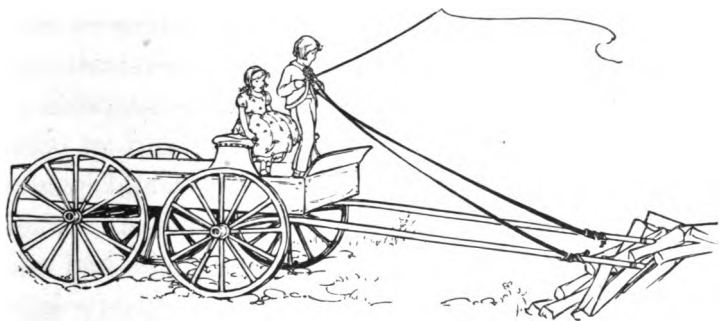
After fretting a little at this vexation, and wishing somewhat pettishly, "that people would not take his things," he contrived to make a hook of a large pin which his mother gave him, and went down to the pier. He threw his line out into the water, sat down on a log and began watching the cork for indications of a bite. Margaret stood by his side with her eyes fixed very intently on the cork.

But the fish did not bite, and Frank soon tired of this sport. He drew in his line, saying it was of no use to fish that morning. He declared that he did not believe there was a fish in the river. Besides, he did not blame them for not biting at a pin. Frank was beginning to get out of humor. He wound up his line and went back to the house.

There was a wagon standing in the yard. "Ah, Margaret!" he exclaimed, "this wagon is just the thing. Let us get in and have a ride."

He leaned his fishpole against a tree that was near by and helped Margaret into the wagon. Then he took the reins and fastened one of the ends to each shaft. After that, with great labor he drew the wagon along to a

woodpile and rested the shafts on the wood so as to keep them in a horizontal position. Margaret was in the wagon and she was much pleased to be drawn, and urged Frank to go on and give her a ride in the wagon all about the yard. But Frank said she was too heavy.



He now got into the wagon, took the reins and whip, and began to drive. However, he found that the rest of the harness which was lying on the floor of the wagon under his feet was somewhat in his way. So he threw it out on the grass. He pretended that the wagon was a ship at sea in a storm, and he was throwing the cargo overboard. This idea amused both him and Margaret very much.

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When the harness was all out Frank gathered up the reins again and drove on, talking all the time about the scenery supposed to be in view, and the various objects and incidents which he fancied as occurring by the way in their imaginary ride. Sometimes he would pretend that they were going through a gloomy wood and that he was afraid they would meet robbers; and he would whip his horses and urge them on with the utmost vigor to escape from the danger. Then he would come into an open country, very rich and beautiful, and would point out to Margaret the streams and lakes and waterfalls, or the lofty precipices and the dark mountains which came successively into sight. At length he would rein in at the door of a tavern, and hold long conversations with the landlord about the accommodations which he wanted and the terms on which the landlord would furnish them.

Frank entertained himself and Margaret in this way for about a quarter of an hour, and then he became tired of riding. He got down from the wagon and helped Margaret down. For a moment he paused while he looked at the

harness lying on the ground, with an indistinct idea in his mind that it was his duty to put it back in the wagon before he went away. But he thought he would come back pretty soon to take another ride, and meanwhile he would go into the workshop and see what Beechnut was doing.

The workshop was a large room in one of the sheds; and Frank and Margaret had heard a hammering there and concluded Beechnut was busy inside. They found him mending some hay rakes. He was standing before a great bench on which were several of the rakes he had brought in to be repaired. One needed a new tooth, another a new handle, while a third needed a wedge to tighten a loose joint.

Frank climbed up and sat on the edge of the bench near where Beechnut was working; and he reached a hand to Margaret and helped her up so she could sit by his side. Beechnut was driving in a wooden peg which was to form a new tooth for the rake that he was mending.

"O Beechnut!" said Frank, "that reminds me—you promised a great while ago to make me a wooden horse, and you have not done it.

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I don't think you keep your promises well at all."

"That is a heavy charge to bring against me," said Beechnut. "When did I promise it should be made?"

"I don't know," replied Frank. "You didn't say any particular time. You were to make it for me sometime or other, and you have never made it at any time."

"There is more time coming," said Beechnut, "plenty of it. Perhaps I shall make the wooden horse sometime or other yet."

"But you ought to have made it before now," argued Frank. "To cause me to think you are going to make it when you don't make it, is deceiving."

"Hi-yo!" said Beechnut, "what a character I am getting."

"It is as wrong to deceive anybody as it is to tell a lie," declared Frank.

"Always?" asked Beechnut.

"Yes, always," answered Frank very positively.

"Once I knew a boy," said Beechnut speaking very gravely, "who had a hen; and as he

thought that she would forsake her nest if he took the eggs all out and left it empty, he made a wooden egg and left it there for a nest egg. He wished to make the poor hen think it was a real egg, and so deceive her."

"I know who you mean," said Frank. "You mean me. But that is a different thing. She was only a hen. I meant one does wrong to deceive men."

"Well, I once knew a man," continued Beechnut, "who had only one arm. The other had been shot off in the wars. He found that it was rather disagreeable to other people to see a man with one of his arms off at the shoulder. So he had a cork arm made with a hand to it, and it was so exactly like a real arm that nobody observed any difference. He kept a glove on the cork hand, and every one was deceived and thought it was a real hand."

"I could tell," affirmed Frank.

"Do you think," asked Beechnut, "that it would be wrong for a man to wear a cork arm or a cork leg so exactly made that people would think it was a real one?"

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“Yes,” declared Frank desperately. He did not know how else to get out of the corner into which Beechnut had driven him.

“Well,” said Beechnut, “we won’t talk about that any longer, and as soon as I have finished this rake I will go and make a wooden horse.”

In a few minutes the rake was done, and Beechnut conducted Frank and Margaret to the woodshed to look at a great log which he had laid aside some time before for the body of the wooden horse. It was a log of a very irregular shape having some rude resemblance to a horse. Beechnut had observed this odd appearance of the log the winter before when it was in the woodpile in the yard, and had thrown it aside intending to put legs to it some day for the children; but the convenient time for doing this had not arrived until now.

“There,” said Beechnut as he pointed out the log to Frank and Margaret, “what sort of a horse do you think that will make for you?”

“Excellent,” replied Frank. “Let’s haul him to the shop and put his legs in immediately.”

So Beechnut and Frank, after rolling the log over and over several times to get it out

where they could take hold of it, lifted it up and lugged it into the shop. Margaret tried to help by taking hold of a branch which represented the tail and lifting with the little strength which she had at her disposal. Thus the monster was finally got into the shop and tumbled down there on the floor.

Beechnut then made legs for the horse and bored holes with a great augur in the log for their insertion. While he was doing this, Frank asked what name his horse should have when he was finished.

"You must name him yourself," said Beechnut. "I am going to make him a galloping horse. He will have three pairs of legs, and they will be of different lengths, and when you rock him back and forth on them you can suppose that he is galloping. You had better go and ask Wallace what would be a good name for an animal with six legs."

"All right," said Frank, "I will; or no," he added, after a moment's thought, "it will be better for you to go, Margaret, because you see I want to stay and watch Beechnut finish the horse."

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“But I want to stay, too,” said Margaret.

“Why, that isn’t of so much consequence,” argued Frank. “You know it is necessary I should learn how horses are made; for perhaps I shall have to make one myself some day. I may want to make a little one for you, if I can find the right kind of a log next winter. So it is better you should go and ask Wallace about the name.”

Margaret was easily persuaded in such cases as these, and though she had no great confidence that Frank’s plans of making a horse for her would ever be accomplished, she consented to go on his errand. In due time Frank saw her returning, and he called out to know what Wallace had said the name was to be.

“It is Polly something,” replied Margaret. “He has written it down on this paper.”

Frank took the paper, repeating at the same time in a tone of contempt the name which Margaret had suggested, “Polly!” said he, “Polly is no name for such a horse as this.”

He opened the paper and read what was written on it to Beechnut and Margaret, thus:

“I think you had better call him Polypod.”

Frank threw back his head and laughed. "Oh, Polypod!" he exclaimed, "what a name!"

The legs of the horse were soon finished. They were formed of short stakes sharpened a little at one end and driven firmly into the augur holes which had been bored to receive them. They were set in such a manner as to slant outward to prevent the horse from falling over on his side. The middle pair of legs was a little longer than those before and behind, and a rider seated on the horse and rocking it to and fro would produce a sort of jolting motion.

When the work was done they carried the horse out to a plank platform at the end of the house, and established him there. Beechnut brought two buffalo robes from the barn, and folding them twice, he placed them on the horse, one behind the other. The foremost formed a saddle for Frank, and the other a pillion for Margaret. It happened there was a stub of a branch growing out of the log between Margaret's seat and Frank's, and this was very convenient for Margaret to enable her to hold on.

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To add interest to the sport Beechnut taught the children a song to sing which he made up for the occasion, and then he went away leaving them singing and riding old Polypod, keeping



time with their music to the jolting of the horse. The song was this:

High and low
Fast and slow,
Over the hills, away we go.
Hi, old Polypod! Ho, old Polypod!
Tumbling, rumbling, stumbling Polypod.

The children sang this stanza with great glee at the top of their voices.

An hour or two later, Beechnut, in looking

about the premises, found the traces of disorder which Frank and Margaret had left in the garden and around the wagon in the yard. He put away the things Frank had left out of place and noted the time it required to do so. It took him ten minutes. He then went in search of Frank.

"Well, Frank," said he, "how do you like old Polypod?"

"Very much, indeed," answered Frank.

"Have I fulfilled my promise to your satisfaction?" continued Beechnut.

"Yes," said Frank, "entirely."

"Now I have a charge against you," said Beechnut. "You have been at work in the garden, and you have left the wheelbarrow and the tools and ever so many weeds in the walks. Then you went to play in the wagon, and finally left it out of its place, and with the reins tied to the shafts, the harness on the ground, and everything in confusion."

Frank appeared quite astounded at these accusations. He did not know what to say.

"Are you guilty or not guilty?" Beechnut asked.

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"Why, guilty, I suppose," replied Frank; "but I will go and put the things right away."

"No," said Beechnut, "that is done already. Everything is put away except your fishpole. That is your property and I have nothing to do with it. But it is my business to take care of the garden and the wagon. So I have put them in order, and all you have to do is to submit to a proper punishment for putting them out of order."

"Well," responded Frank, "I will. What is the punishment?"

"You must pay double damages," said Beechnut. "It took me ten minutes to clear up after you, and you must do work for me equal to twenty minutes; but as your time is not worth more than half as much as mine it will take you forty minutes to do the work."

"What is the work to be?" Frank inquired.

"Turning the grindstone after supper for me to grind the scythes," replied Beechnut.

Frank made no objection. In fact he went at this task so industriously and was so pleasant about it that Beechnut released him at the end of half an hour.

Beechnut never scolded; yet he always punished the boys he had dealings with for their faults and delinquencies. Sometimes his punishments were of a very odd and whimsical character and afforded great amusement—while they answered the purpose of punishments perfectly well. It is true that the boys were not obliged to submit to them, but they generally did so of their own accord, for the punishments were sure to be reasonable, and Beechnut was very good-natured in inflicting them.



XV

THE BEAR HUNT

Late in the summer, a large black bear that had been living remote among the mountains became tired of the dismal solitude of its abode, or else perhaps found difficulty in obtaining food enough far off in the forest, and came toward the settlements of men to see what it could find. It was very successful in this expedition. In a lonely field near a farmhouse it discovered a flock of sheep sleeping quietly one midnight. The bear crept up to them and seized a lamb in its powerful jaws and then ran off into the woods. The lamb set up a loud and incessant bleating, though the sound grew fainter and fainter as it was borne off through the thickets.

The whole flock of sheep was aroused by these sudden cries, and all began to bleat and to run in a panic toward the house. They all ran thus except one, the mother of the lamb that was carried away. She, instead of going with the others, ran into the gloomy thickets where her lamb had disappeared, and resolved to attack the enemy if she could overtake it, whatever it might be. She, however, did not succeed in overtaking the bear, and ran to and fro completely bewildered. The bear knew perfectly the way it was to go. It had eyes that could see even in the densest recesses of the forest, and in the darkness of midnight.

The farmer came out with a lantern to learn the cause of the commotion, but he could not determine whether any of the sheep or lambs had been carried away. The darkness and the confusion prevented him from counting those that remained to see if they were all there. He presumed from the bleating of the mother sheep that one of the lambs was gone.

In the morning all doubt was at once removed; for the spot where the bear had strug-

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gled with its prey was plainly to be seen, and its track could easily be traced into the woodland, marked, where the ground was soft by the impression of its footsteps, and at other places by blood.

On making these discoveries the farmer's indignation was roused to the highest pitch. He called his neighbors to see the tracks made by the bear. They had flocks and herds exposed to the same danger and soon formed a plan for arming themselves and setting off into the woods in a company to endeavor to find the bear in its retreat and kill it.

For arms the farmers got out all the muskets, fowling pieces, and pistols they could find in their houses; and those who had nothing that would shoot supplied themselves with pitchforks, hatchets, and stout clubs. One man made a sort of spear of the point of a scythe which he contrived to fasten into the end of a handle that had once belonged to a pitchfork. It made a very formidable-looking weapon, and the man brandished it in the air before him, and said that all he wanted now was to see the bear coming at him with its mouth

open. He would give it something to swallow not quite as tender as the flesh of that lamb.

In the meantime, the messengers galloped from farmhouse to farmhouse spreading the tidings. One of them came to Mr. Henley's and told Beechnut the news, in hope that some of Mr. Henley's workmen might go with them. It happened that the workmen were all away. Margaret was just going down to the river to join Frank, who was on the little pier, fishing; but her attention was arrested by seeing the horseman ride rapidly into the yard. When he stopped before Beechnut, who was saddling a horse that was hitched to a post near the barn, she went to hear what was the matter. After the messenger had finished what he had to say he rode away as fast as he came.

Beechnut left the saddle loose on the back of his horse, and hurried into the house, while Margaret walked slowly and thoughtfully down toward the pier. She was thinking of the bear and intending to tell the story to Frank.

Frank had heard the footsteps of the horse as it came galloping along the road, and had looked around to see what was the matter.

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He observed that the messenger, after a moment's conversation with Beechnut, went galloping away. This excited his curiosity. He stood, accordingly, on the pier holding his fishpole in his hands with the line in the water, but with his face turned toward Margaret. As soon as she came near enough to hear him he called out, "What was it that man galloped into the yard about?"

"About a bear," replied Margaret.

"What about a bear?" asked Frank very eagerly:

"It is about a bear that came out of the woods and carried off a little lamb," said Margaret, who had now reached the pier. "The men are all going off into the woods to shoot the bear and bring the lamb home."

In a very hurried and excited manner, Frank immediately laid his fishpole down on the pier, placed a flat stone across it to keep it steady, and set off for home. Margaret ran after him, urging him to wait for her. Frank, however, was too much stirred by the intelligence he had received to pay any heed to Margaret's calls. He made his way as fast

as he could into the yard to find Beechnut. He caught a glimpse of him going into the shop. Frank followed and found him examining an old gun he had taken down from a high shelf.

"Are you going into the woods to shoot the bear?" asked Frank.

"I am going into the woods," replied Beechnut; "but I do not expect to shoot the bear."

"Has my mother given you leave to go?" Frank inquired.

"Yes," was Beechnut's answer.

He had been to the house and asked permission to accompany the expedition. Mrs. Henley had been unwilling at first to give her consent. But Beechnut said that *they* had flocks of sheep to be defended as well as the neighbors, and that it was incumbent on him, since all the men of the farm were away, to go with the other farmers. Whatever might be the difficulty or the danger, he ought to take his share with the rest. So finally Mrs. Henley consented.

Beechnut explained all this to Frank who

said, "I mean to go too. I will ask my mother."

He ran off to the house, but in a few minutes returned looking very downcast and disconsolate. Beechnut was still at work on the gun, and his attention was so absorbed by it that he paid no heed to Frank. Margaret was standing by looking at the gun with an expression of mingled curiosity and awe. She glanced up when Frank came into the shop, and said, "Will she let you go?"

"No," replied Frank peevishly; "and I don't see why. I might go as well as Beechnut."

"She will not let you go then?" said Beechnut, snapping the hammer of the gun back and forth in his attempt to put it in order. "How provoking!"

"Yes," Frank responded, "it is very provoking indeed."

"If I were you," said Beechnut, "I would do something or other very desperate. I would fret about it all day."

Frank was silent.

"You will not find another thing so good to fret about in a twelvemonth," continued Beech-

nut. "Here now is a boy that his mother will not allow to set off in a company of fifty men with dogs and guns to make a tramp of six miles through the woods among the mountains hunting a wild beast; and see how patient the little fellow is!"



So saying, Beechnut began to pat Frank gently on the back. Frank seized a leather strap which chanced to be lying on the bench, and gave Beechnut a great whack across the shoulders with it. Then he ran out of the shop. He tried very hard to look cross until he was out of sight, but he did not quite succeed.

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Just as he was passing out of the door he burst into an involuntary laugh. He recovered himself almost immediately, and Beechnut having followed him to the door saw him standing there, pretty near, looking as sullen as ever.

“Poor little lamb!” said Beechnut in a tone of great condolence.

On hearing these words, Frank made a dash at Beechnut intending to pound him with his fists; but Beechnut evaded him by running around the horse. As he ran he said, “I meant the lamb that the bear carried away—not you.”

“No,” asserted Frank, “you meant me. I know you did.”

Beechnut now stopped to put the saddle properly on the horse and to fasten the girths. He then went into the shop, and came out a moment afterwards carrying a small light ax. With that in his hand he mounted the horse and started to ride away.

“Are you not going to take the gun?” asked Frank.

“No,” replied Beechnut.

"Why not?" Frank inquired.

"Oh, there are various reasons," Beechnut responded.

He was advancing across the yard toward the gate, and Frank was trotting along by his side holding on to the stirrup.

"The gun is out of order," Beechnut continued, "and I am afraid it would not go off. If it should go off, I am afraid it would kick me over. If it did not kick me over, I am afraid it would shoot one of the men; and if it did not shoot any of the men, I am afraid it would not hit the bear. So good-by. Poor little lamb!"

Frank stooped and seized a handful of grass which he threw at Beechnut as he cantered away. Then he walked back to meet Margaret. He told her Beechnut was the greatest tease that ever he knew, and he hoped the bear would catch him in the woods and eat him up.

Frank now went and got a wooden gun Beechnut had made for him some time before, and amused himself and Margaret for more than two hours in rambling about the yard

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and garden, and shooting at various objects which he made believe were bears.

The men that were to go on the hunt met at the house of the farmer whose flock had been attacked. Here they agreed on the rules of the expedition. They were all to proceed together, following the track of the bear as long as the track could be seen. Then they were to separate into a number of parties, each under its own leader, and proceed by different paths, though in the same general direction. They were to be very careful not to fire a gun unless they should actually see the bear, so that the report of a gun in the forest would be a signal to all who heard it to go immediately to the spot whence the sound came. In case the several parties should become so widely separated that some failed to hear the guns, or in case the bear should not be seen and no guns fired, they were each to keep on as far as they thought they could safely go and get back that night. These arrangements being agreed on, the expedition began its march.

The men walked in single file following the

track of the bear, with the more experienced and sagacious hunters in front to keep a sharp watch. Some of the young men in the company laughed at Beechnut for bringing an ax. They asked him whether he thought that an old bear was going to stand still like a maple tree while he came up with his ax to cut the bear down. Beechnut took all this raillery in good part and trudged patiently on in his place in the line with the ax on his shoulder.

After getting about a mile and a half into the woods, the leaders of the expedition lost sight of the track and could not recover it. The company then divided into several distinct parties and went on at a little distance from each other so as to explore a considerable breadth of forest as they advanced.

Beechnut was attached to a party of six led by an old hunter whom the men called Uncle Harry. He had joined this division because he had more confidence in Uncle Harry than in any of the other commanders. The rest were noisy and talkative and were continually calling out to the company to go this way or that, and directing attention to

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discoveries which always turned out to amount to nothing. Uncle Harry said little and made no pretensions and yet was very observant and watchful. Beechnut therefore concluded he would have the best chance of seeing the bear by following Uncle Harry.

The old hunter knew the country perfectly well, and he formed a correct judgment of the route which the bear would be likely to take. He pushed on, however, without seeing any signs of the bear for more than three miles. At length, just as they were entering a wild and dismal glen almost surrounded by rocky precipices, Uncle Harry suddenly stopped and said, "Hush!"

He pointed up the glen. The men all looked, and there on the ground under an oak tree they saw a monstrous black bear sitting with its fierce glaring eyes turned full on them.

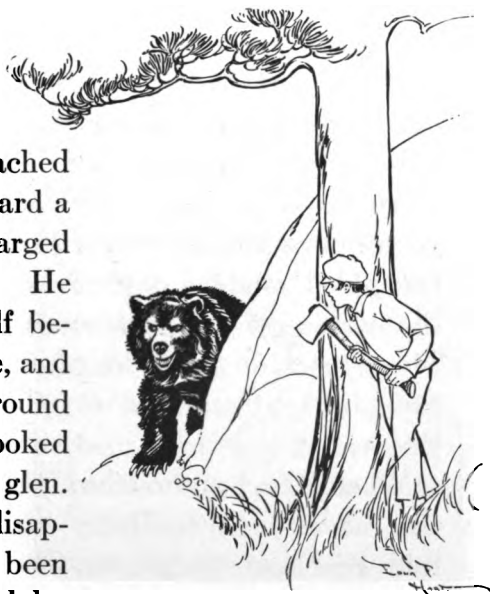
Beechnut glanced around the glen to see if there were any way by which the bear could escape in case it was attacked by the men and wounded. He noticed a path leading up the rocks at one side of the glen, and this

seemed to be the only egress except that blocked by the men. Immediately he left the party and running into a thicket stole round by a circuit until he came to the path about half up the ascent.

Just as he reached this point he heard a volley discharged from the guns. He sheltered himself behind a great tree, and then peeping around from one side looked down into the glen. The bear had disappeared. It had been slightly wounded by

one of the guns and had scrambled up into the oak tree. The men were loading their guns anew. Presently they fired a second time.

The bear was again slightly wounded, and it hastily came down the tree and rushed toward the path Beechnut was guarding. He



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stood all ready with his ax while the bear scrambled up the hill. The instant the creature came within his reach he dealt its head a tremendous blow that felled the bear dead to the ground.

The report of the guns and the shouts of the men brought one of the other parties to the spot. The rest had wandered too far away to hear them. By using the stems of young and slender trees, the men who were assembled made a sort of handbarrow to put the carcass of the bear on and carry it home. They found a road in returning which took them back by a nearer way than that by which they came.

When they approached the settlements of the farmers, Uncle Harry and the other men told Beechnut to get on the barrow with the bear that they might carry him home in triumph. Beechnut wished to decline this honor, but the men insisted, and so he mounted the barrow and took his seat on the bear.

The procession went on very well thus for a short distance, but presently came to a little bridge, which, though strong enough when

first built, was getting old and decayed. Just as the men carrying Beechnut and the bear were midway on the bridge it broke down, and half the party fell into the brook. Beechnut being the highest, fell the farthest, and the sharp end of one of the poles of the barrow entered his leg and made a shocking wound. For the rest of the way he had to be carried in earnest.

During the next two or three days Beechnut suffered a great deal of pain from his wound. He was feverish and restless besides, and thirsty all the time. Frank and Margaret went in occasionally to see him, but he could not talk much with them, and they soon went out. Once when Frank visited the bedside he asked Beechnut whether there was anything that he could do for him.

“Yes,” replied Beechnut, “if you will go up into the mountains and bring me down a little brook so that I can have it running here by my bedside, and drink as much as I want, I will be everlastingly thankful to you.”

Frank laughed and said he could not do

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that; but he would go to the well and get a pitcher full of cool water.

Two days later, Frank and Margaret came to Beechnut's door one morning after breakfast and peeped into the room. Beechnut saw them and told them to come in. As they entered they perceived that he was much better. "How do you do this morning?" asked Frank.

"Well!" replied Beechnut emphatically, swinging his arms at the same time over his head. "Perfectly well. I never felt better in my life. I could mow an acre of grass this morning, if they would only bring it to me here on the bed. I have got to be still on this bed a week longer till the wound gets healed; but I am going to have beefsteak for breakfast. Think of that!"

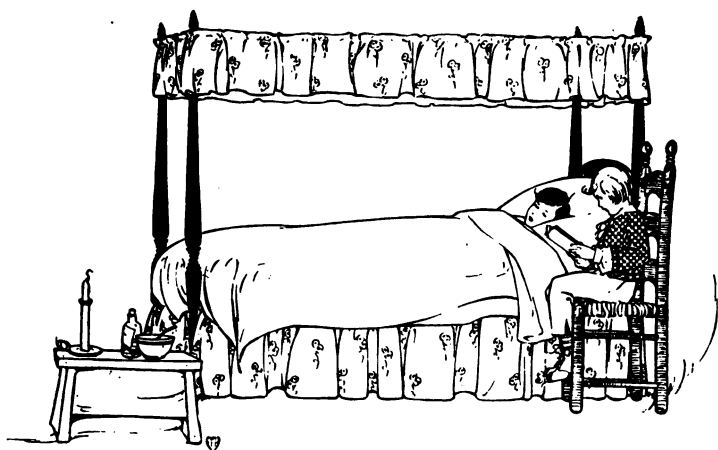
Frank said he did not think much of that. He had been having beefsteak for breakfast himself nearly every morning right along.

"But I am a convalescent," explained Beechnut.

He then attempted to sit up in his bed a little by way of showing how strong he was;

but he found that he was not so strong as he had supposed, and on attempting to raise his head he was faint and dizzy. He was, therefore, very glad to lie down again.

However, he gained a great deal of strength in the course of the day. Frank and Margaret



came in several times to see him, and in the afternoon he was well enough to hear Frank read a story from a book, only Beechnut went to sleep during the reading. Frank looked a little disappointed when he turned around at the most interesting part of the story and saw that Beechnut was asleep. But the nurse

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seemed pleased and said the very best thing that could be done with a book where any one was sick was to read the sick person to sleep with it.

Beechnut was such a good patient and obeyed the directions of the physician and nurse so implicitly that he recovered very rapidly. At last he could sit up in an easy chair with his foot on a cushioned stool before him. Here he amused himself in making a pair of crutches, and by the time they were done he was vigorous enough to walk all about the room on them.

Frank was so much pleased with this operation that he said he wished Beechnut would make *him* a pair of crutches. He tried Beechnut's, but they were too long.

"Well," said Beechnut, "the first time you get hurt so you cannot walk on your legs I will make you some crutches."

"No," replied Frank, "I want them at once. But stop, I'll hurt myself now, and then I *must* have them."

Then he tumbled down on the floor and pretended to have sprained his ankle. After

that he went limping about the room moaning and making the most ludicrous contortions both of face and figure, greatly to Margaret's amusement.

Beechnut finally agreed to make Frank a pair of stilts which he thought Frank would enjoy more than the crutches. Thus the matter was settled, and when the stilts were ready Beechnut was able to go out and show Frank how to use them. He now began to resume his usual work and soon was as hearty and well as ever.



XVI

A WAGON RIDE

Autumn came and Wallace, who was soon to return to college, planned a ride and a picnic. Beechnut was to go, and Frank and Margaret and a number of the village children. Wallace procured two large covered wagons, and with Beechnut's assistance arranged three comfortable seats in each, and each of these seats would accommodate three passengers. So the whole party was to consist of eighteen persons.

They started one day immediately after dinner. Beechnut had charge of one wagon while Wallace had charge of the other. There

were two horses to each wagon. The sky was clear and the air cool, and the country was very beautiful robed in brown autumnal colors. The party took a road which led along the bank of the river up the stream. This road was sometimes in the woods, sometimes in the midst of fertile fields of ripening corn, or orchards loaded with apples. Whenever the children observed a tree on which the apples appeared to be particularly sweet and juicy they stopped to gather some of them. The farmers would always give them as many as they wished to take.

They went on thus very pleasantly until Wallace said it was time to turn back. They were now only about two miles from home in a straight line, and yet they could not get back to where they started from without riding nearly twelve miles. The reason of this was that after going up the river five or six miles they had crossed the stream by a bridge in a lonely place among the mountains, and had come down on the other side until they were almost opposite their starting point. Yet as the river was between, and as there was no bridge nearer

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than the one they had crossed, they could not get home without going back the way they came.

The two wagons were accustomed to keep at some distance apart in order that the one behind might not be troubled by the dust the other raised. Beechnut with the wagon which he was driving was in advance, and his party only appeared in view from time to time well on ahead. Parker was driving the wagon in which Wallace was riding. He sat on the front seat with two of the village girls, Caroline and Augusta. Wallace sat on the middle seat accompanied by Margaret and Mary Bell.

At length, as they were passing a farmhouse, Caroline said she was thirsty, and she proposed to Parker to stop the wagon in order that they might all get a drink of water. "Wallace will go for it," said she, "because he can get out most easily."

"Yes," said Wallace, "I will do so gladly."

He got out and walked toward the farmhouse which was a short distance from the road. When he reached the door he knocked, and a

little girl came to see who was there. Wallace asked her if she would be good enough to give him and several friends who were out driving a drink of water. She answered that she would go and get some, and turned and went away leaving him at the door.

Wallace looked toward the wagon which was standing in the road and waved his handkerchief to indicate that he had been successful. For some time he remained at the door, and at last began to wonder what the girl in the house was doing.

The fact was, she found on looking at the water pail that the water in it was not as cool and fresh as she wished to offer to the stranger at the door. So she concluded to go to the spring and get more. It was this that occasioned the delay.

While Wallace remained standing at the step Margaret saw a flower growing by the roadside and asked Mary Bell to let her get out and pick it.

"Oh no, child!" said Caroline. "Sit still. Wallace will be back very soon, and then we shall want to go directly on."

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“Why not let her get out?” said Parker.
“There will be plenty of time.”

“Yes,” said Mary, “and I will get out with her, so that I can help her to get back.”

Accordingly, Mary and Margaret got out together. Just as Margaret reached the ground she saw Wallace coming with a pitcher of water in one hand, and a tumbler in the other.

Margaret found several flowers, one after another, growing in the grass, and she remained gathering them until all the party in the wagon had drunk. Wallace then offered some water to Mary Bell, and to Margaret, but Margaret was too much occupied with her flowers to be thirsty. After Mary had taken what she wanted, Wallace went back to the house with the pitcher and tumbler.

“Come, Margaret,” said Mary, “we must get in.”

“Yes,” responded Margaret, “in a minute. Here is one more flower that I want to get.”

“We shall have to wait for her,” complained Caroline. “I knew we should.”

Then suddenly a new thought struck her, and

she added, "Drive on, Parker. Let us run away from them just a short distance."

So Parker drove on. Caroline looked around to see what Mary Bell and Margaret appeared to think of being thus left behind. She observed that Margaret looked a little frightened; but Mary stood quietly by the roadside as if she were entirely at her ease. Seeing that Mary seemed so unconcerned, Caroline remarked to Parker, "We will go on far enough to make them think we do not intend to stop for them."

Just then she saw Wallace coming from the farmhouse, and she decided that it would be good fun to tease him also a little. "Drive on," said she to Parker; "let us see what they will do."

Wallace came to the roadside, and Mary said, "They are running away from us."

"Never mind," responded Wallace, "they will not run very far, I think."

Then he began to examine Margaret's bouquet. "What pretty flowers," said he.

"Yes," said Margaret; "but the wagon is leaving us behind. Come, let us run."

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“Oh, no,” said Wallace, “we will walk. They will stop for us pretty soon.”

So Wallace and his companions began to walk along the road, following the wagon. The horses were walking slowly, and the company in the wagon were looking back, laughing and making bows of salutation.

Wallace took off his hat and made very polite bows in return.

“We had better run,” said Mary. “They will not stop for us and we may as well run and overtake them.”

“All right, if you wish it,” was Wallace’s response.

So they began to run.

“They are coming, Parker!” exclaimed the children in the back part of the wagon. “Whip up, or they will catch us.”

Parker whipped up his horses, and soon got them into a canter which of course carried them forward much faster than the pursuers could run. Wallace, therefore, slowed his pace to a walk.

“You see it is of no use to run,” said he. “We will walk along quietly, until they get

tired of their nonsense, and then they will halt for us."

"I hope you are having a very pleasant walk, ladies and gentleman," said Caroline, calling back from the wagon.

This call was responded to by all her companions with long and loud peals of laughter. Wallace waved his handkerchief as if in acknowledgment of Caroline's kind wishes.

"They are walking along as if they enjoyed it," said Caroline; "but we will make them alter their opinion before we let them get in again, won't we, Parker?"

"Yes," replied Parker, "that we will."

"Whip up," ordered Caroline, "and make the horses run a little."

Parker whipped the horses, and they trotted on for a considerable distance, so that Wallace and his party were left far behind.

"Well," remarked Wallace, "I don't see but that we shall be obliged to give it up. They have made us walk now about half a mile, and that is far enough for any reasonable allowance for joking. I think that the best plan for us is not to try to overtake them any more."

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"But then how shall we get home?" asked Mary. "It must be ten miles or more."

"It is ten miles round by the road," explained Wallace, "but we might go the other way and get across the river somehow. By that route we would not have to go more than two or three miles."

"But we cannot get across the river," said Mary.

"Oh, yes," said Wallace, "I can get you across in some manner or other. So I propose to turn around and see what we can do."

"I am willing," responded Mary, "only the party in the wagon will stop pretty soon when they find that we do not appear, and they will wonder what has become of us."

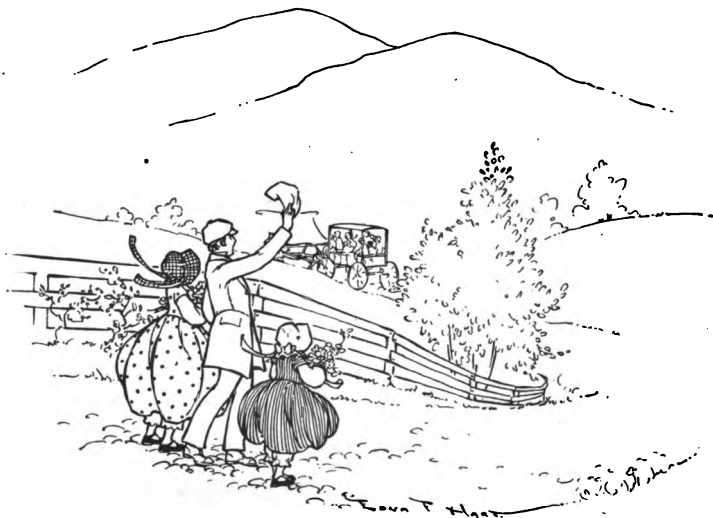
"Yes," said Wallace.

"And after they have waited some time," continued Mary, "and we don't come, they will be very much frightened."

"Yes," agreed Wallace, "they deserve to be."

"They won't know what to do," said Mary. "They won't dare to go back without us and leave us here ten miles from home. What will they do?"

"I can't say," responded Wallace. "They must contrive a way themselves to get out of their own perplexities. It is as much as we can do to get out of ours. I don't think it is



worth while for three persons on foot, who have been deserted ten miles from home, to trouble themselves much about how those who deserted them are to get home, especially as they have a wagon and a good pair of horses."

By this time the wagon was disappearing around a turn of the road. As soon as it

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was fairly beyond view Wallace with Mary Bell and Margaret turned and began to walk the other way.

Caroline's persistence in going on came to an end at nearly the same time that Wallace's patience in following was exhausted. Soon after the wagon had passed out of sight of Wallace and his party, Caroline asked Parker to stop and wait till those behind came around the turn. "In fact," she continued, "we may as well let them get in now. We will not make them walk too far."

Parker stopped the wagon, and those in it waited a few minutes talking together and looking for Wallace and the two girls to appear.

"Why don't they come?" Parker said at length.

"I don't know," Caroline responded. "Perhaps they have got tired and are sitting down to rest. They will come pretty soon."

So they waited in the wagon some time longer, but no one appeared.

"Jump down, Parker," said Caroline, "and go back to the turn of the road and see what has become of them."

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Parker got out of the wagon and walked to the turn of the road where he stood a minute or two looking earnestly along the road beyond. Then he came back saying as he approached the wagon, "I cannot see anything of them."

"They have gone to hide somewhere in the bushes to frighten us," declared Caroline. "But they will find they are mistaken. We will wait here a little while, and then if they don't come, we will go home without them."

So Caroline and her party waited ten minutes, but Wallace did not appear.

"How provoking they are!" exclaimed Caroline. "It is four o'clock, and time that we were on our way up the river. I have a great mind to go on and leave them altogether."

"Then how would they get home?" asked Parker.

"I don't know," replied Caroline, "and I don't care. They have no business to keep us waiting so long. Suppose you go back and call them," she added, after a moment's pause. "Perhaps they will hear you and answer."

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"Let us turn the wagon round and ride back," said Parker.

"Very well," responded Caroline, "that will be better."

Parker therefore turned the wagon round and drove slowly back along the road, all the party looking intently and eagerly into the forest on either hand and calling out, sometimes one, and sometimes another, "Wal-lace! Wal-lace!" and then again, "Ma-ry Bell! Ma-ry Bell!"

The sound of their voices was echoed back from the mountain sides, but there was no other response. They now began to be seriously troubled. It was getting late, and it was plainly imprudent to remain there much longer, as they now had barely the necessary time to get home before dark. But on the other hand, the idea of going away and leaving Wallace and Mary Bell, and especially such a child as Margaret in so lonely a place and so far from home, seemed wholly out of the question. They even thought it possible that the missing party might have strayed away into some by road and so got lost in the woods.

For these reasons they were very anxious, and at the same time they were utterly at a loss what to do. They finally concluded they must not remain any longer where they were, and Caroline proposed they should try to overtake the other wagon that they might tell their story to Beechnut and get his aid. This plan was adopted, and Parker turned his horses' heads in the direction of home and drove forward as fast as possible.

Meanwhile Wallace and Mary Bell and Margaret walked along the road down the river. It was a pleasant afternoon, and Mary and Margaret had full confidence that Wallace would contrive some way for getting them home. So they enjoyed the walk very much, and rambled along talking with each other and with Wallace.

They soon came out of the woods and had the river in view close at hand. It was not very wide and it flowed in a smooth and tranquil current. There were distant farm-houses to be seen among the hills across the river, some of which Mary recognized as houses situated not far from where Mrs. Henley lived.

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"If we were only on the other side of the river," said she, "we could go directly home and be there in a quarter of an hour; but I don't see how we are going to get across."

"Oh, we shall have no difficulty about that," Wallace assured her. "I have a plan all formed. I am going to take you over in a boat."

"In a boat?" repeated Mary. "How are you going to get a boat?"

"I am going to take ours," said Wallace.

"But our boat is on the other side of the river," said Margaret.

"Yes," responded Wallace, "and I am going across to get it."

"How are you going to get across?" asked Mary.

"By swimming," Wallace replied. "I can swim the river very easily by taking off my coat and my shoes."

In a few minutes after this the party came to a rocky point on the bank, and when they got to the lower side of it they found that Mrs. Henley's house and the boat itself were in sight. "Now you must sit down on the rocks here,"

said Wallace to his companions, "and you can see me all the way as I am swimming across."

Just then Mary observed something which attracted her attention on the other side of the river. "I think I see a boy standing over there," she said, and after a little pause added, "He has a dog, too. The dog looks like our Curley. It is a large brown dog. Yes, I believe it is Curley, and if it is, the boy must be John Hooker. He is one of our neighbor's boys, and Curley sometimes goes off to play with him."

"Then the boy can bring the boat over to us," said Wallace.

"Oh, no," said Mary, "he is not big enough. It would not be safe to trust him in the boat. I would rather trust Curley to get the boat to us. If Curley only knew that I was here and that I wanted to get home, and if John would untie the rope by which the boat is hitched and put the end of it in Curley's mouth he would swim across and pull the boat after him. He is very strong."

Mary then stood up on the rocks and called with a loud voice, "John Hook-er!"

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There came back in reply a prolonged and distant "Hel-lo-o!"

"Is that you, John?" called Mary Bell.

The voice answered, "Yes."

Mary now began to call Curley, and as soon as he heard her speak his name he seemed to know who she was and to perceive that she was separated from him by the broad surface of the river. He looked wildly across the stream, barked, ran this way and that along the margin of the water, stopped suddenly and looked at Mary again, and then seemed about to leap into the water.

"Untie the boat, John," Mary called, "and give Curley the end of the rope in his mouth."

John started at once to obey, at the same time speaking to Curley in order to keep him back from the water until the rope was ready. Curley was very much excited and very much perplexed. He ran first to John and then back to the edge of the water to take a look at Mary, darting continually from one place to the other and barking loudly. At length John got the boat untied and offered the end of

the rope to Curley, saying, "Seize it, Curley!" and pointing to the water.

Curley seemed to understand. He caught the end of the rope with his teeth and leaped into the river. Mary immediately began to encourage him by calling to him from the



opposite shore while Margaret clapped her hands with delight, exclaiming, "He is coming with the boat! He is coming! He is coming!"

Curley aimed directly across the river, but the current carried him down the stream. So Wallace and the girls began to move down, too. They kept opposite him all the time that they might encourage and cheer him, and prevent his wasting his strength by attempt-

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ing to swim against the current. He came on very slowly, but finally reached the shore. Wallace stood ready at the margin of the water to take the rope, which Curley promptly delivered to him, and scrambled up the rocks to Mary.

The party crossed the river readily in the boat, with Curley in the bow, and once on the opposite side it took them only a very little while to reach their homes.

When Caroline and those with her failed to find Wallace they had determined to ride on as fast as possible to overtake Beechnut. He was, however, so far in advance that though Parker drove as fast as he could it was not till they reached the bridge nearly half way home that they saw anything of the forward wagon. As soon as Parker got close enough to be heard he shouted to Beechnut to stop, and Caroline called out that they had lost some of their party.

"How did you lose them?" asked Beechnut.

"Why they strayed away from us," replied Caroline, "and did not come back. We waited until we thought it was not worth while to wait any longer, and then we drove on."

"How did they happen to stray away?" Beechnut inquired.

"Why, to tell the truth," said Caroline, "we began it by running away from them."

"Oh," said Beechnut, "that was the case, was it?"

"What had we better do?" questioned Caroline.

"Who are they?" said Beechnut.

The heads were so numerous in the two wagons that Beechnut could not tell what persons were missing.

"There was Wallace," responded Caroline, "and——"

"Oh, Mr. Wallace was one, was he?" said Beechnut.

"Yes," answered Caroline.

"Very well then," continued Beechnut, "we have nothing more to do. We will go on."

"What do you mean by that?" asked Caroline.

"I mean," said Beechnut, "that Mr. Wallace will take much better care of himself than you or I can take of him."

So saying, Beechnut started his horses and

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drove on. When the wagons were near the end of their journey Beechnut turned off from the main road to leave some of those in his party at their homes. The other wagon was to go on and would pass Mrs. Henley's. Caroline felt very anxious and unhappy, and hoped to get some tidings there of her missing friends, though not really expecting that she would.

Margaret was swinging on the front gate and saw them coming. "Now," said she to herself, "I mean to pay them for hoping that we were having a pleasant walk."

The moment, therefore, that the wagon party came within hearing distance, and before Caroline could see who it was that was swinging on the gate, Margaret called out, "I hope, ladies and gentlemen, that you are having a very pleasant ride."

"Why, Margaret!" exclaimed Caroline, "how did you get home? And have Wallace and Mary got home, too?"

"Yes," replied Margaret, "long ago."

"I am so glad," said Caroline; "but how did you cross the river?"

"Guess," said Margaret.

She said this, however, in a tone which plainly indicated that she did not intend to tell. So Parker drove on.

Early the next morning a boy came to the home of Mary Bell with a note for her. She opened it and found it was from Caroline. It was as follows:

My dear Mary:

I am so ashamed of myself for running away from you yesterday that I do not know what to say or do. It was very ungrateful, when Wallace had taken pains to plan the excursion for us and to get the wagons and the horses. I am ashamed to speak to him about it, but I wish you would tell him how badly I feel.

Your friend

Caroline Kent.

Mary sent the note to Wallace, and when he had read it he said, "Well, Caroline is a good girl after all."



XVII

CONCLUSION

Beechnut stayed at the home of Mr. Henley for a number of years, but at last a time came when it seemed to him that he must go out into the world and seek his fortune. When he had formed his plans he spoke about them one day to Mr. Henley, who had returned to Franconia shortly before from a long journey. It was arranged that they should talk the matter over in detail that evening, and after supper Mr. Henley sent Frank to ask Beechnut to come to his room as soon as he was through with his work.

“May I come too?” said Frank.

"Yes," replied his father, "I have no objection."

So in about half an hour Frank and Beechnut came in together. The room contained Mr. Henley's library and had bookshelves all around the sides. There was a large table in the center with a great many papers on it. Mrs. Henley was sitting beside the fire sewing. On the other side of the fire was a chair for Beechnut. Frank sat down on a rug in front of the hearth.

"Well," said Mr. Henley, when Beechnut had taken his seat in the chair provided for him, "you tell me you wish to leave us and begin life for yourself. I suppose you have thought of the subject a good deal and have pretty clearly in mind what would suit you best. You can do almost anything you please. When you first came to us, you deposited some money with me. That has been at interest ever since, and nearly the whole amount of your wages has been added to it and has also been earning interest. You are now quite rich for a boy of your age. If you choose, you can go to college. You have enough, with

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what you can earn as you go along, to get through college and study a profession. How old are you?"

"Eighteen," was Beechnut's answer.

"Considering the progress you have made in various studies," said Mr. Henley, "you could probably fit yourself for college in another year."

Beechnut did not reply immediately to this suggestion.

"Or, if you prefer to go into a store," continued Mr. Henley, "I can get you a situation in New York. I know several of the best establishments in the city that would be glad to have you."

Beechnut was still silent.

"Perhaps you have some other plan which you have thought of for yourself," suggested Mr. Henley. "What is your idea about the matter?"

"I think," responded Beechnut, "if you approve of it, I would like to go to one of the large seacoast towns and learn to be a ship carpenter."

"Well," said Mr. Henley, pausing and

hesitating as he spoke, "well, a shipbuilder's trade is a very good trade. But then I think you can get along without going to such rough work as a trade. You will find it rather hard to swing an adz or a calking mallet all your days."

"Yes, sir," acknowledged Beechnut, "but I would hope not to have to work hard with my own hands very long. I would work till I knew enough about the trade to build first-class ships, and then, as I have some money for capital, I could perhaps get contracts in New York to build ships. In time I could come to own two or three small vessels, or shares in them, and these I could send to sea, and the profits on them would enable me to build or buy more. Then, at last, if I prospered, I could go to New York and have an office there and attend to my vessels when they came in from their voyages."

"That is a good plan," said Mr. Henley, "provided you are able to carry it out, and I rather think you are."

"If I went through college," said Beechnut, "I should spend all my money and have nothing to begin the world with. Besides, when I

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came from college, I might fail to get into business in my profession. It is too great a risk for me to run."

"But you run the same risk in your other plan," responded Mr. Henley. "You may fail to get into business in navigation."

"Yes," said Beechnut, "but if I do not succeed in getting ships of my own, I can certainly go on building ships for other people and enjoy the work. A good ship carpenter is well paid, too."

"That is true," Mr. Henley agreed; "it is an excellent trade."

So it was settled that Beechnut should go and enter a shipyard to learn the shipbuilding business. His affairs at Mr. Henley's were soon wound up, he bade all his friends good-by, and in another week was busy at work with a chalk line and a saw among the oak planks and timbers in a great Kennebec shipyard.

As may well be imagined, Beechnut was very industrious and faithful in his business, and he made rapid progress in learning his trade. He soon became master of its mechanical side, and then the owners of the yard, finding that

he had considerable mathematical knowledge, transferred him to the office where he was employed in making the plans of the ships that were to be built.

In process of time, the firm of shipbuilders began to send Beechnut to New York to transact business for them. Thus he became acquainted with a great many merchants and shipmasters. He was economical and prudent in his way of living, and his money was all the time accumulating. At last, when he became of age, he had enough capital to join with a New York merchant in building a small vessel. His knowledge of ship construction was very complete and he had a knack for selecting the best workmen, so that he was able to produce a vessel worth much more than it cost him, and he sold it as soon as it was launched at a considerable profit.

Beechnut went on more and more prosperously every year. He resided most of the time in New York, though he went back and forth a good deal between the city and the shipyards where the vessels which he had charge of were building. He had deserved success,

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and his ability and industry and other good qualities won their natural reward, not only of wealth, but of happiness in his chosen work.

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